

JUDAISM

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REFORM JUDAISM—A CENTENNIAL EVALUATION

David Polish

Benjamin Z. Kreitman

Arthur J. Lelyveld

David Hachen

Edward Graham

LONG-HAND WITH BUBER

W. Gunther Plaut

THE JEWISH GANGSTER

David Singer

MACCABEAN MARTYRS: EARLY CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES

Donald F. Winslow

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A QUARTERLY JOURNAL

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The First Reader

THE YEAR 1973 MARKED THE ONE HUNDREDTH anniversary of the founding of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the parent body of Reform Judaism and representing the congregation arm of the movement. This occasion is worthy of celebration, not only within the ranks of Reform Judaism, but wherever there is genuine concern for the survival of Judaism and the Jewish people. The U.A.H.C. fathered the Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion, the scholarly institutions of the movement, and preceded the organization of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the rabbinical organization. The Union laid down the pattern which was subsequently followed, with some variation, to be sure, by Conservative Judaism and by Orthodoxy in the United States. Its publications, notably in the field of youth literature and text-books on every age level, were comparably superior in content and format to what was available, and ultimately worked a revolution in these crucial areas. It is no wonder that the publications emanating from Cincinnati were widely used outside Reform congregations as well. One could list many other important achievements of the agency, which have duly been recorded at the Centennial.

We, in JUDAISM, have felt that the finest tribute we could pay to the U.A.H.C., and to Reform Judaism as a whole, would be, not a panegyric, however well deserved, but a sympathetic, yet rigorous, analysis of the movement, its achievements and weaknesses, and, most significantly, the unfinished tasks before it. Obviously, these would be construed differently from various points of view. The symposium, "Reform Judaism—A Centennial Evaluation," will, I believe, contribute significantly to an understanding of the movement in the past and its future lines of development.

David Polish, the immediate past president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, presents a richly rewarding analysis in his paper, "The New Reform and Authority." His presentation of the history of the movement, as well as the goals and tensions which characterized it from the beginning, serves as an introduction to an understanding of the various conflicting tendencies in contemporary Reform. These controversial issues include mixed marriages, the role of Halakhah, the expansion of *mitzvot*, and, most fundamentally, the nature and character of religious authority in the movement.

Benjamin Z. Kreitman, a leading Conservative rabbi and former chairman of the Committee on Law and Standards of the Rabbinical

Assembly, writes on "Reform Judaism, the Conservative Point of View." He pays generous tribute to the role of Reform Judaism as an instrument for stemming the tide of alienation and apostasy, thus contributing powerfully to Jewish survival. He underscores the degree to which the other movements in contemporary Jewish life—not merely Conservatism, but Orthodoxy as well—have gained from the pioneering activities of Reform. He points out how the differences among the movements have been reduced because of the cataclysmic events in Jewish experience in the twentieth century and the consequent shift of ideology in all groups. He declares, however, that one more giant step must be taken if Reform is to be truly within the mainstream of Jewish life. It must accept the authority of Halakhah in the areas of personal status, conversion, marriage and divorce, for these areas affect the unity and integrity of the Jewish people as a whole.

A vigorous defense of the rationale for Reform Judaism is presented by *Arthur J. Lelyveld* in his paper, "Reform Judaism—An Insider's Evaluation." He closely analyzes the position of Judaism at the beginning of the 19th century and of the motives which informed the actions of the early Reformers. Cognizant of the vagaries of extremists in the ranks of Reform Judaism, he urges an appreciation of the "central" position within it. This dominant group in present day Reform is marked by a growing sense of identification with the Jewish people and an increased acceptance of traditional Jewish values and practices.

In its capacity for self-examination and self-criticism, Reform Judaism is unique in Jewish life—and probably in general society as well. This admirable trait is revealed in the official changes of position embodied in the historic documents of the movement, the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 and the Columbus Program of 1915, as well as in countless lesser known aspects.

Recently, the Central Conference of American Rabbis authorized a detailed, in-depth research study on the American Reform rabbi, his background, outlook, ideas, frustrations and hopes. The results were embodied in the voluminous Lenn Report, which will undoubtedly serve as a landmark in evaluating the role and future of the American rabbi in general, even beyond the confines of Reform. The picture which emerges is analyzed by *David Hachen* in his paper, "The American Reform Rabbi Today," with implications that may affect the destiny of American Judaism as a whole.

In still another area of contemporary Reform Judaism, the conflicting tendencies are mirrored in the various revisions and proposals for change in the Union Prayer Book and the other liturgical publications. Liturgy, as the language of prayer, is the key to the outlook and ideals of a religious community. *Edward Graham* subjects all of these to critical analysis in his paper, "Winds of Liturgical Reform."

The recent publication of the first volume of Martin Buber's letters does more than offer us the opportunity of penetrating into the inner life and personal experiences of this twentieth century giant of the Jewish spirit. The letters are a reflection of all the currents and eddies in modern Jewish life and thought, particularly in Central Europe. His correspondence included virtually every significant figure in German Jewry and beyond.

In "Long-Hand with Buber," *W. Gunther Plaut* presents some of the most striking aspects of these letters, many of which have significant implications for us today.

From the time that Jews entered into the mainstream of modern society, Jewish occupations have proliferated in bewildering variety. One Jewish activity, however, has not attracted serious study. *David Singer* maintains, in his article, "The Jewish Gangster," that the emergence of the Jewish criminal is worthy of serious investigation, psychological as well as sociological. He sees the Jewish gangster as symbolizing in asocial form the Jew who is *in* modern society but not quite of it.

It is not generally known, either by Jews or by Christians, that for several centuries the Christian Church observed a festival on August 1st called "The Birthday of the Maccabees." By this liturgical practice the Church paid tribute to the martyrs and the heroes of the Maccabean era.

From the modern perspective, the Maccabean War represents the first struggle in the history of mankind for liberty of conscience and freedom of religion. It was not for political purposes or territorial gain, but for the right to practice their ancestral faith. More specifically, had the Maccabees not resisted the Antiochian persecution, or had they fought and lost, not only would Judaism have been destroyed, but Christianity would never have been born. Thus, Christianity has its own important stake in the Maccabees.

There are significant implications in this observation which are totally lost sight of in the widespread view that "good will" is advanced when Christians honor Hanukkah and Jews celebrate Christmas. The two festivals are simply not parallel. This is true, not only because Christmas is the central festival in Christianity and Hanukkah a lesser holiday in the Jewish calendar. The more fundamental reason is that the Maccabees have an important role in Christian tradition (of which the early Church was well aware), while the Christian Savior has no place in Jewish tradition.

But this contemporary implication is not our present concern.

In his very interesting paper, "The Maccabean Martyrs: Early Chris-

tian Attitudes," a Christian scholar, *Donald F. Winslow*, examines the treatment of the Maccabees by four outstanding Church Fathers, Cyprian, Origen, Augustine and Gregory Nazianzus. While they all agree upon the importance of the Maccabean martyrs, their interpretations reveal some highly significant differences.

The Book of Esther, read at the synagogue service on Purim, is by far the most popular and familiar of the five Megillot or scrolls. Hence, it is frequently referred to as The Megillah, "the scroll par excellence." In spite of its popularity, the book bristles with difficulties, both theological and historical, for which a vast variety of solutions have been proposed. *Abraham D. Cohen* offers an interesting interpretation in his paper, "'Hu Ha-goral': The Religious Significance of Esther," which makes highly appropriate reading at the Purim season.

The complaint is frequently heard—and it is often justified—that young people who claim that they are "turned off" by Judaism in any of its established forms have not really given it a chance. They have not approached it with sufficient seriousness and purpose. They have not immersed themselves in its classic texts and fundamental insights. They have not involved themselves in its regimen of observance. For them the remedy is plain—to approach the Jewish worldview and its way of life with the respect and seriousness that any great cultural tradition deserves at the hands of fair-minded, intelligent people.

There are, however, knowledgeable and sensitive Jewish men and women, fewer in number than the first category, to be sure, but all the more precious on that account, whose complaint is on another level. They have been exposed to Judaism, have studied its literature and have practiced its rituals. Yet they find themselves alienated by many aspects of contemporary Judaism and feel themselves spiritually homeless in the established institutions. A moving and sensitive presentation on this viewpoint is offered by *Naomi Bluestone* in her paper, "Exodus from Eden: One Woman's Experience." Her arguments deserve careful attention by Jewish leaders.

The contemporary Yiddish writer, I. B. Singer has cast a spell over modern readers, particularly since increasing numbers of his novels and stories have been translated into English. *Stanley Schatt* devotes a critical analysis to this important literary figure in his paper, "The Dybbuk Had Three Wives: Isaac Boshevis Singer and the Jewish Sense of Time."

R. G.

The New Reform and Authority

DAVID POLISH

IN 1871, AT A CONFERENCE OF REFORM RABBIS in Cincinnati, the following resolution was passed.

The members of the conference take upon themselves the duty to bring prominently before the congregations, to advocate and to support by their influence, the following project of co-operation of the American Hebrew Congregations:

The congregations to unite themselves into a Hebrew Congregational Union with the object to preserve and advance the union of Israel; to take proper care of the development and promulgation of Judaism; to establish and support a scholastic institute, and the library appertaining thereto, for the education of rabbis, preachers, and teachers of religion; to provide cheap editions of the English Bible and text books for the schools of religious instruction; to give support to weak congregations, and to provide such other institutions which elevate, preserve, and promulgate Judaism.

Resolved, that whenever twenty congregations, with no less than two thousand contributing male members, shall have declared, in accordance with the preceding resolution, their resolution to enter the H.C.U., the said committee shall convoke the synod to meet at such time and place as may be most satisfactory to the co-operating congregations.

The Central Conference of American Rabbis was yet to come into being in 1875, but under the long and persistent urging of Isaac Mayer Wise, the Rabbis' body issued the call for the creation of a union of congregations. Two years later, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations came into being. Its centennial is now being observed.

It is noteworthy that the first organized body of Reform Judaism in the United States was an assembly of congregations, and that the impetus for it came from a Rabbinical group. Even more noteworthy is the reference to the request that the organizing "committee shall convoke the synod."

Now, in 1973, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, together with the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the World Union for Progressive Judaism and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, finds itself vastly and globally enlarged, and radically altered programatically, ideologically and in its very identity. It is an overstatement but, nevertheless, suggestive to say that the entire Movement retains little of its origins except its name. For years, the presence of a branch of the College-Institute in Jerusalem has represented more than a geographical axial shift. Nor does the requirement that entering students spend their first year in Jerusalem reflect only concern for linguistic or textual proficiency. The network of camping programs, sum-

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mers for American youth in Israel, and a year of study and work in Kibbuzim for college students reflects both an Israel orientation and new educational ventures by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The proposed establishment of a world center in Jerusalem, the proliferation of Rabbis and Congregations in Israel, the development of the Leo Baeck High School in Haifa, are facets of the new goals of the world Union. The Central Conference, intent on both addressing Klal Yisroel and sharing in its work, has entered into dialogue with the leadership of three of Israel's four Kibbuz Movements and, together with the Union, is actively engaged in the work of the Presidents' Conference and the World Jewish Congress. All this suggests not only a broadening of scope and vision, but a reconstitution of this Movement from a par ecclesiastical ideology to a perception of Judaism in more authentically organic terms.

Change generates far-ranging problems, and for Reform one of them involves the encounter with the halakhik tradition which has been precipitated, in large measure, by the axial shift toward Israel. Yet the issue is not new. It is imbedded in the origins of the Movement and was already portended in the summons of 1871 for the creation of a Union of Congregations. The issue is more acute than ever before. Its roots extend to mid-nineteenth century Germany, and from there to the resolution calling for the creation of a Union of Congregations. Nowhere else in the resolution is there reference to a "synod," and we can be sure that the term was not a casual one. It had been inserted with full awareness that it was a fighting word in the debates within the Reform Movement, and the resolution's framers indicated by its use that for them, at least, the proposed Union was to go beyond the stated objectives outlined in the second paragraph of the resolution. The conflict over whether a Reform synod should be convened had its genesis in Germany where, in the mid-eighteen forties, some Rabbis were urging that a synod be called for the purpose of issuing a declaration of faith by Rabbis and laymen. The synod issue was a consequence, perhaps inevitable, of an ideological tension within the Reform Movement in Germany. Although it had emerged, in part, as a revolt against the stringency of Rabbinic authority, as well as a response to the promise of Emancipation, a significant sector of the Movement was not prepared to eradicate its traditional and Rabbinic ties. This ambivalence manifested itself in the radically different approaches of Abraham Geiger (1810–1874) and Samuel Holdheim (1806–1860). Geiger was concerned about the proliferation of impromptu reforms by a number of Rabbis, and his primary concern, in his public and more guarded pronouncements, was the synthesis of the Jewish spirit with "a sound science." At the same time, he inveighed against "many overeducated and sensual ones that would willingly throw away all ancient treasures . . . and divest themselves of their

own character and past as something useless." Significantly, he scanned the horizon for "a new Hillel." Holdheim's extremism manifested itself in the position that, except for purely ecclesiastical matters, the autonomy of the Rabbinate was superseded by that of the state in many Jewish areas, including marriage, which is a civil act. Jewish national identity had ended. "All laws and institutions which are based upon the election of a particular Jewish people . . . have lost all religious significance and obligation."

As conceived within the Berlin Reform Society, the synod

was to take into consideration the changes which had come upon Jewish life and thought in the new environment of the nineteenth century, re-interpret the truths of Judaism in the light of those changes and give authoritative expression to what constituted the fundamentals of Jewish thought and practice . . . The individualism which followed in the train of breaking loose from the fetters of code observance threatened disaster in the view of many. In place of the fixed anchor—the ceremonial law—to which Jews had clung aforetime, there was now no support; reform went to greater or less lengths according to individual caprice. . . . The synod which was agitated for by the Berlin reformers . . . was to concern itself with determining the significances and the essence of Jewish belief and practice, to pronounce upon the relation of modern reform Judaism to the traditions, to interpret the present attitude upon all vital points, as the liturgy, marriage and divorce, the ceremonies, the position of woman, the dietary laws and the Sabbath (Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, pp. 333–334).

The intent of the synod was made unmistakable in the words of one of its protagonists, Ludwig Philippon, who declared in 1849 that it was as necessary for contemporary Judaism as was the Sanhedrin at Tiberias after the destruction of Jerusalem.

The proposed synod did not come into being, but for the purposes of our discussion it is important to note the following: (a) The proposal recognized the danger of nihilism within reform. (b) It addressed itself not only to Jewish ceremonies but to halakhik issues such as marriage and divorce. (c) It contemplated procedures which would be binding upon its adherents. (d) Decisions would be made by joint action of Rabbis and congregants. (e) It was a live issue which agitated the Reform community, and was not considered to be irrelevant to its concerns, or outside the scope of its deliberations. Two subsequent synods did take place in Leipzig and in Augsburg, but they "failed to realize the hopes of their projectors. The time was evidently not ripe for such a movement. There were too many differences among Jews" (Philipson, p. 458).

The issue was transplanted, however, from Germany to the United States. Evidently, the call for a synod in the Cincinnati resolution of 1871 was overlooked or side-stepped in the birth of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, because, in 1881, Isaac Mayer Wise was still agitating for it. In the debates at the Central Conferences in 1904, 1905

and 1906, the critical point at issue was the possible authority of the synod. The opposition feared the possible coerciveness of a synod which could become an ecclesiastical court with power to enforce its decrees. In 1906, the Central Conference voted down the advisability of a synod after having approved it by a small margin in 1904, but this did not end the discussion. In fact, David Philipson concludes his chapter on the Leipzig and Augsburg synods as follows:

There can be little doubt that in the present unsettled state of Jewish opinion on many vital points, owing to the transition from the old to the new, there is a great need for a central organization of this kind composed of rabbinical and lay delegates, whose power shall be not to loose or to bind, but to pronounce judgments on controverted points of doctrine and practice (Philipson, p. 459).

I have chosen to discuss American Reform within the context of the synod issue, not only because it is implicit in the creation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, but because the issue is as germane today as it was a century ago, and has manifested itself in such apparently disparate issues as Jewish law and Zionism. Although it has not been resolved, the issue implicit in the synod controversy continues to nag, and the Reform movement is more heavily engaged in it than ever before, and with the same ambivalence which agitated it in its origins, although there is the beginning of a shift of balance. There is no call today for a Reform synod, but the operative component of the synod approach, authority, is very much in evidence. We will momentarily forego assessing the critical question of imposed versus internalized authority, but the source and the nature of authority are central to all discussion which is linked to halakhah. The intensity of the issue can be gauged by the mounting frequency of the term "halakhah," as against former references to "ceremonies" and "customs." This is not to be construed as necessarily a general turn to halakhah but, rather, a recognition that the halakhah must be responsibly confronted even where it cannot be conscientiously accepted. If this does not differ substantively from the approach of the more traditional earlier reformers, there is a heightening of this sense of concern and responsibility in our day. To understand this it is necessary to make a detour into Jewish history without which not only understanding but the very components of the process we are examining would be lost.

The detour will enable us to understand that both history and the varying interpretations to which it was subjected played a far greater role in the development of Reform than did ideology alone. Thus, European Reform was not merely a product of the Emancipation but a dramatic response to it. Abraham Geiger's stress on the universalist-scientific-progressive nature of Judaism was predicated on the assumption that the particularist elements were the product of historical factors emanating especially from the exilic experience. Therefore, particular-

ism is not intrinsic to authentic Judaism and is incompatible with the conditions of modern society which had granted Jews full equality. "There is no longer hostility abroad," wrote Geiger. Implicit here is the assumption that the particularistic elements in Judaism are not inherently undesirable but, rather, are useful or expendable as the exigencies of Jewish existence might demand. There is nothing wrong in such a pragmatic approach, except that it cannot be defended on any but expedient considerations and, theoretically, the rejoinder of the Ḥatam Sofer and others in his generation that the Torah was not susceptible to such considerations shifted the issue to a different dimension. What is more, if the vagaries of history are to determine Jewish practice, then the very considerations which cancelled certain aspects of Jewish life must also reinvoke them. It is in this context that events in Jewish life and in our world have compiled a new confrontation with Jewish particularism, with special reference to observance. Acknowledging my own partisanship, I wish to stress, not the merits of particularism but, rather, the conditions out of which it is emerging in Reform. The catastrophic events of the twentieth century have compelled a reassessment, not merely of the effectiveness of the Emancipation, but of its intrinsic motivation. If it was prompted by a desire to offer freedom to Jews, it was equally impelled to strip the collective identity of the Jewish people as its price. Following the "Great Sanhedrin" of Paris in 1807, the Napoleonic regime promulgated two decrees in March, 1808. The first established the Jewish Consistoire. The second, which came to be known as the "humiliating edict," established supervision for Jewish loans, required special permits to engage in business, forbade Jews to settle in north-eastern France, and forbade Jews to pay for substitutes for military service (which was permitted to non-Jews). This "emancipatory" decree was especially repugnant, not only because of the restrictions, but because they were directed exclusively at Jews. With this kind of "fine-print" approach to emancipation, it is no accident that Germany, especially in Alsace, saw bloody attacks upon Jews in the wake of the Emancipation, particularly during the nationalistic uprising of 1848.

If history was inadequately perceived by some in Germany, there are indications of a somewhat different reading in America. About 1928, we note the beginnings of a new direction in Reform in which there is a conscious effort to uncover traditional elements for the enrichment of Jewish life. That date represents the approximate half-way mark between 1873 and 1973.

It is significant that this period coincides, roughly, with upheavals in our society and in Jewish life to which the Reform community responded in typical Toynbeeian "challenge and response" fashion. Leaving aside the rising surge of Zionism with which we shall deal later, the growing despair over the unfulfilled promise of Emancipation had a

decisive effect on the attitude toward tradition within Reform (and from a Geigerian standpoint it could have been predicted). The Versailles Treaty, in which minority rights had been granted to Jews in Eastern Europe, was followed by a tidal wave of anti-Semitic excesses in lands of greatest Jewish concentration. The rise of Nazism, even before its legalized triumph in Germany, shook the confidence of many Reform Jews in the credibility of the emancipation, much less its durability. In America, the alarm over the dissemination of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion by Henry Ford, the archetype of everything that was intriguing to middle-class Jews in industrialized America, undercut their confidence in the nation's immunity to anti-Semitism, as did the Father Coughlin era. All this was exacerbated by the Depression, which shattered any lingering illusions about the deterministic messianic mystique of the American system. It is not coincidental that, while the Depression was at its nadir, the Columbus Platform of 1937, affirming the need for intensified Jewish observance, was promulgated. In the realm of intellectual history, Freud had created a psychological revolution, shaking the dogmas of the liberal religious world whose scientific rationalistic suppositions were overwhelmed by the eruption of the unconscious. For Reform Judaism this compelled a re-examination of the Jewish experience as an ideational construct alone, and required a confrontation with the irrepressible, non-rational, primordial components in Judaism.

It is legitimate to ask how these events resulted specifically in the turn by Reform toward a stronger encounter with Jewish tradition and with Jewish law. Why did they not produce a heightened commitment to pure universalism and total anti-nomianism as an act of defiance against historical aberrations which must be resisted in order to preserve the fruits of emancipation? This did, in fact, occur among a segment of the Reform community. But the overwhelming weight of conviction leaned toward heightened stress on particularism, and articulated it in Zionism and greater adherence to tradition. This is borne out by the Lenn Study on the Future of the Rabbinate, published by the Central Conference in 1972. Thus, in one statistical table, 49% of strong or moderate particularists, as against 8% of strong universalists, insist on the use of a *huppah* at weddings; 49% of strong or moderate particularists, as against 6% of strong universalists, disapprove of Rabbis officiating at intermarriages.

One explanation for the turn toward tradition may be that Reform scholars and theologians, from Julian Morgenstern to Abba Hillel Silver at opposite ends of the spectrum, had advocated a restored synthesis of the universal-particular syndrome. And the Reform community, without requiring to be convinced, responded intuitively to the injunction to "build a fence around the Torah." In addition, there was an influx of those children of Zionists, Socialists and Yiddishists who, unable to find

their total Jewish identity in Jewish secularism alone, sought more than what classical Reform or the Jewish ethnic ethos alone could provide. Many of them were products of a Jewish culture which was as opposed to Rabbinical excesses as were Jews of German stock, but they had an abiding adherence to at least the spirit of traditional values. (These were the people whose ancestors a Reform historian had called “uncouth Poles,” whose Yiddish language he had labelled “jargon,” and whose ways he compared invidiously with the “Occidental” practices of modernized Jews.) Their response to the traditional elements in the religious sector may have been motivated by non-theological considerations, but their instinct for deepening peoplehood with traditional attributes was Jewishly sound. Most of all, Reform Jews were responding to the compulsion of historical events which outstripped theology. If all this applied before World War II, the Shoah and the rebirth of the State of Israel with the accompanying despair over the obduracy of world opinion, it has applied with mounting relevance to the issue of Jewish observance.

Contemporary Reform is embroiled in a struggle for identity, and the struggle takes its most dramatic form in a pattern reminiscent both of the synod controversy and of the Holdheim-Geiger division. In our period, however, much more is at stake.

When the Reform Movement began its turn toward greater stress on tradition, it did so largely in the context of customs and ceremonies. The Columbus Platform stated that Judaism, instead of being a religion only, was “a way of life” which “requires in addition to its moral and spiritual demands the preservation of the Sabbath, festivals and Holy Days, the retention and development of such customs, symbols and ceremonies (sic) as possess inspirational value.” Later, in 1937, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, at its Biennial Convention in New Orleans, recommended the inclusion in Reform Services of “traditional symbols, ceremonies and customs . . . the singing . . . of the Kiddush . . . the singing of traditional Jewish hymns.” The Convention also acknowledged that “Reform Jewish worship has allowed many symbols, customs, etc., of traditional Jewish Worship to fall into disuse.”

The practical application of this view was increased stress on Hebrew in the Services, Bar Mizvah, and the cultivation of various rituals. The Central Conference instituted a Committee on Ceremonies, and much of the work of that Committee dealt with ritual in the narrower context of the term. Confrontation with issues of day to day *mizvot* and with the *halakhah* was yet to come, and it is doubtful whether it would have occurred as drastically without the rebirth of the State of Israel. Israel accentuated the sense of peoplehood, but peoplehood also compelled a confrontation with those *halakhik* issues which made peoplehood compelling. Toward the end of the nineteen fifties, terms like *miz-*

vah and halakhah became increasingly normative, and this development is more significant than might appear, because the issue in Reform is no longer ceremonies but whether we are addressing ourselves to *mizvot* or to the halakhah, or perhaps in some cases to the former, and in others to the latter. In certain respects, Reform is experiencing a *déjà vu* in which the issues of Shabbat observance and authority are being resurrected after their earliest vitality more than sixty years ago, when the Central Conference had a Commission on the Sabbath.

At the heart of the issue is whether observance in Reform is to be required by fiat or by personal and collective internalization. (I would guess that historical developments, such as growing authoritarianism in our society, could have a bearing here.) Is a synodal approach to be decisive or persuasive? Antecedent to this, is Jewish observance to be the product of an official body or of individuals? In an effort to cope with both of these issues, the late Frederic Doppelt and I produced our Guide (not Code) for Reform Jews in 1957. It was prompted by our conviction that Reform Judaism required sturdier observance than rituals, that this should be systematic rather than impromptu, that it could come about (at that juncture) through the efforts of individuals, that it was a hortatory not a mandatory device, and that it could not be presented without a rationale. Basic to the entire effort was our desire to differentiate between *mizvot* and *minhagim*, and, as a consequence, we began each section of our Guide with "It is a *mizvah* to...".

From its inception, Reform has been mindful of the claims of halakhah to its attention, if not to its obedience. The continuing work of the Responsa Committee of the Central Conference reflects, not merely a concern with issues of observance, but a commitment to searching out halakhik precedent, employing halakhik dialectic and, where unable to submit to the halakhah, not to reject it capriciously. It is true that this approach has its shortcomings as an instrument of seeking affirmation when it is available and going on a deviant path when it is not, but even this procedure is not altogether alien to Rabbinic law-making. In the latter case, the predilection is to find precedent suitable to a generally rigorous construction. In the latter instance, the predilection is to find a more permissive precedent. Jacob Lauterbach placed his authoritative stamp on the halakhic approach to Jewish issues. Solomon Freehof has contributed several volumes of responsa under the imprimatur of the Reform Movement. Most recently, the CCAR, through its Shabbat Committee under the chairmanship of Gunther Plaut, has produced a Shabbat Manual (*Tadrikh l'Shabbat*) in which the *mizvot*, the customs, the music and the folkways of Shabbat are set forth.

On the more volatile public sector, the Reform Rabbinate has come to grips with the issue of intermarriage which crosses two highly sensitive boundaries—our relationship with Israel, and the autonomy of the

Rabbi. The second issue, of necessity, deals with the problem of authority—is there an authority higher than the individual?

The autonomy of the Rabbi and the Congregation has been, in theory, a paramount principle of Reform, and has been invoked whenever critical issues have arisen. In the debates concerning a proposed synod, the issue of personal freedom and immunity from any form of coercion became central.

In 1905, the President of the Central Conference made the following appeal.

It is in this wherein lies the strength of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the promise of its future. It is and will continue to be merely a deliberative and advisory assembly, not an ecumenical council, convened for the purpose of establishing creeds and dogmas, of fixing forms and ceremonies, and making compliance with them obligatory and difference from them heretical" (CCAR Year Book, 1905, p. 176).

The same argument was employed by Stephen Wise in 1917 during a debate on Zionism.

If you pass this resolution, no matter how you water it or mitigate it, the moment you say that we who are Zionists are anti-religionists, that we are enemies of religious Judaism, that moment we must regretfully yet with absolute conviction say, "We can stay no longer within the Conference." I stand here today not as a Zionist, but as a reform rabbi. I would not have you say that a reform teacher or rabbi has forfeited the right to be a teacher of reform Judaism because he has subscribed to the Zionist platform. I appeal not for Zionism, but for the inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of liberal Judaism (CCAR Year Book, 1917, p. 139).

The Central Conference has adhered to the principle of personal sovereignty, although at times it has been charged with flouting it.

No issue, however, has placed the encounter of personal freedom and authority in greater tension than the intermarriage question. In 1909, the Central Conference issued the following resolution: "The CCAR declares that mixed marriages are contrary to the tradition of the Jewish religion and should, therefore, be discouraged by the American Rabbinate." It has subsequently been suggested that the reason for not calling upon Reform Rabbis to desist from officiating was that so few Rabbis indulged in the practice at the time. It is more plausible to believe that the intense synod debates prior to 1909 had hardened the resistance of the Conference to any kind of authoritarian statement, to such an extent, in fact, that the call to "discourage" intermarriage was issued, not to members of the Central Conference, but to "the American Rabbinate." On a number of occasions, efforts had been made to strengthen the resolution, but they failed by narrow margins. In 1962, at Minneapolis, there was an abortive effort to approve officiating at intermarriages. When the issue was joined in 1971 and resolved on June 1973, the following resolution was passed by a vote of 321 to 196.

SECTION I—The Central Conference of American Rabbis, recalling its stand adopted in 1909 “that mixed marriage is contrary to the Jewish tradition and should be discouraged” now declares its opposition to participation by its members in any ceremony which solemnizes a mixed marriage.

SECTION II—The Central Conference of American Rabbis recognizes that historically its members have held and continue to hold divergent interpretations of Jewish tradition.

In order to keep open every channel to Judaism and K'lal Yisrael for those who have already entered into mixed marriage, the CCAR calls upon its members:

1. To assist fully in educating children of such mixed marriage as Jews;
2. To provide the opportunity for conversion of the non-Jewish spouse, and
3. To encourage a creative and consistent cultivation of involvement in the Jewish Community and the Synagogue.

The resolution issues a request to Reform Rabbis not to officiate at intermarriages, something the Central Conference had not ever done in this specific context, although, as we shall see, it did so in another setting. It deliberately stops short of enforcement procedures, although it takes note of the fact that some Rabbis will disregard the call to desist. At the same time, the Conference did refer certain matters to various Committees for further inquiry. One is the Ethics Committee, which does have enforcement capacity in matters of Rabbinical encroachment. Nevertheless, the individual Rabbi is urged, but not compelled, to abstain. The expectation is that the collective voice of the Conference will exert moral deterrence for many. The resolution is illustrative of an effort to reconcile various contradictions—disapproval without coercion, personal rights in encounter with the needs of Klal Yisroel, inner direction in encounter with outer direction. I do not suggest that the reconciling process is altogether satisfactory in this case. I indicate only that within the context of a Reform which had been torn, from the very beginning, in two directions between anti-nomianism and receptivity to halakhah, between synodism and anti-synodism, the Conference took a positive step toward voluntaristic responsiveness to the demands of Jewish law and the needs of the entire Jewish people.

It is significant that the major reconsiderations of the issue of intermarriage took place in the wake of the Shoah and the struggle for the State of Israel. It is questionable whether the acute sensitivity to Klal Yisroel would have been manifested without Medinat Yisroel. I am not here concerned with justifying the non-coercive policy of the Central Conference but, rather, in pointing out that, in taking its new position on intermarriage, it has taken a stand on perhaps the most crit-

ical halakhik issue in Jewish life, and has also defined (not for the first time) the role of the individual in the setting of authority. Enforcement is the administrative side of public authority, but such authority is validated by its promulgation, not its enforcement. Thus, for example, school desegregation is valid even if certain school districts might indefinitely defy it. The intermarriage resolution succeeded in demonstrating that Reform is responsive to the requirements of halakhah in one of the central issues of Jewish life. It also demonstrated that the individual cannot claim authority for himself in defining what is required of him as a Jew and as a Rabbi. His freedom to differ and to deviate is not affected, but his claim to authority is. Thus, while the issue of the ultimate source of authority will continue to agitate all within Jewry to whom this is a problem, the ultimacy of the individual has certainly been dismissed. There is a higher (though not necessarily highest) authority, and that is the consensus of the accredited Rabbinic leadership within the Reform community. There is also the implicit authority of the World Jewish Community which cannot be excluded. This authority deliberately is not administrative, but from a moral standpoint it is not thereby diminished. It may be asked how this authority differs from that of the 1909 resolution which states that intermarriage should be discouraged. By altering the discouraging from an abstract judgment which appeals to "the American Rabbinate" to a specific call directed to every individual Reform Rabbi, the resolution takes on concreteness and personal relevance.

What, then, is the nature of authority in Reform if it is not "authoritative"? In a real sense, it is not much different from the authority of other religious segments of Judaism in an open and free society. Increasingly, the disciplined Jew *accepts* the discipline; it is not *imposed* upon him. With varying degrees of receptivity, he takes the requirements of the tradition upon himself. There is no longer the enforcement, not only of any ecclesiastical power, but of the impinging community which can, by its concerned or intimidating presence, enforce observance. Thus, the observant Jew is *compelled* to assume the obligation of fulfilling *mizvot* by the demands of his own needs. Even if he traces the *mizvot* to Sinai, he alone has the power to ratify, to say *naaseh*. This appears to be acknowledged, with much sadness, by Orthodoxy itself, one of whose Israeli leaders said to me, "We have lost our *Hoshen Mishpat*, our *Orah Hayyim* and our *Yoreh Deah*. We must not lose our *Even Ha-Ezer*." In a sense, there was recognition in this observation that a vast area of the private sector is personal in the ultimate sense, that the acceptance of Jewish responsibility is internal. This does not minimize its potential depth. Indeed, except among those for whom the coercive power of Rabbinic legislation is a reality, there is no greater coercion than that to which the individual chooses to submit as a matter of self-determina-

tion. This does not mean that the individual may make eclectic and whimsical choices and regard them as authentic by his say-so. Nothing can prevent him from selecting or rejecting whatever religious life-style he chooses, but he can not necessarily claim authenticity for it. There is, certainly, legitimate diversity in the practices of Judaism, but the diversity acquires its legitimacy from norms that are inherent in, or derivative from, the tradition.

Acquiescence to authority means the development of guides for Jewish living which would be tested by the community's response to them. The responsibility for offering guidance is that of the leadership. It cannot cite libertarianism as justification for withholding formal guidance. The guidance must be accompanied by education and persuasion; otherwise it is only an academic exercise. For good or for ill, acquiescence is within the people's province. And, as has already been suggested, the degree of acquiescence will be largely determined by external events. Thus, coercion or latitude will come from without, in any event, but not at the hands of ecclesiastical enforcers.

Certain aspects of Jewish life, primarily on the public sector of marriage, conversion and divorce, will require confrontation with halakhah, whether affirmatively or negatively. The halakhik problems of divorce and conversion are not on the agenda of Reform, although some individual Rabbis require *mikvah* and *tevilah* for conversion. The Central Conference recently advised its colleagues that candidates for Reform conversion should be made aware of the option of *mikvah* and *tevilah* so that they could make a choice. Some Reform Rabbis also advise divorced couples of the possibility of a *get*, so that they might be aware of possible complications in the event of remarriage. As a body, the Reform Rabbinate defends its right to perform its own conversions in its own way, and standards for conversion stress intensified study of Judaism.

Unlike the public sector, the private sector (within Reform, at any rate) will not be governed by halakhah but by what I refer to as a *mizvah*-system. I am aware of the legally binding nature of *mizvot*, but usage has given the term *mizvah* a less codified connotation than that ascribed to halakhah. One lives under the halakhah. One performs *mizvot*. From a Reform perspective, individual *mizvot* can be performed, altered, suspended or created, but if the halakhah is dealt with similarly, it ceases to be *The Halakhah*. If it is retained substantially, Reform ceases to be. One does not accept halakhah selectively, any more than one picks and chooses in the civil law of his community. *Mizvot*, (in the context in which I present them, not in the traditional context) are specific responses to existential situations in which the Jew answers to history, to his current situation, to the sacred, to the life cycles, to the calendar, to the rites of passage. Through *mizvot*, the individual is capable of re-

living the central elements of his people's history and to bring history into the circumstances in which he and his people presently find themselves. The *mizvah* becomes an immediate response to a given moment. It is not bound to an absoluteness to which few can submit. In this setting, Reform is becoming increasingly *mizvah*-aware, and receptive to guidance in a *mizvah* system in which the demands of the human spirit are more enforceable than any coercive device, human or divine.

The Reform movement is presently engaged in an attempt to fulfill the hopes of some of the early synodists. Whether or not it will succeed is yet to be determined, but the movement has been at work since 1971 at defining the basic principles of Reform. Following, perhaps unconsciously, the lead of the German synodists, a group of Rabbis, scholar-specialists, and laymen, under the leadership of Dudley Weinberg, have been deliberating on a series of theological and philosophical issues. Unlike the Pittsburgh and Columbus Platforms, this is an attempt to speak in behalf of the entire movement, not Rabbis alone. Among the issues to be dealt with are: Who is a Jew; Marriage and Divorce; The Covenant; Ethics, (Personal and Social); The Synagogue; Plural models within the Halakhah; Israel, Diaspora, and Mission; Judaism and World Religions.

Unlike the Pittsburgh and Columbus Platforms, which are cryptic and almost catechistic, the proposed guiding principles attempt to be more expository. In addition, the very effort is a recognition that, *de jure* as well as *de facto*, the Pittsburgh Platform is supplanted and the Columbus Platform requires extensive restructuring. Consensus will be extremely difficult, but the very effort represents an impulse toward internalized authority. Perhaps consensus will come piecemeal over a long period of time, but the steady, centripetal momentum toward internalized authority is unmistakable.

Another manifestation of authority in Reform is the sensitivity to Jewish Peoplehood, of which Israel is the paramount reality. I place this in the framework of authority because, when the question of Zionism would be debated by the Central Conference, Zionists when they were in the minority and, a generation later, anti-Zionists, appealed in behalf of their personal freedom to justify opposition to a definitive stand on Zionism. In 1943, the Central Conference officially declared that Zionism and Reform were not incompatible, but, in addition, took a position which represented a direct request to many of its members. It will be recalled that the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism was organized by members of the Conference. By 1943, over ninety members of the Conference, then consisting of about 410 members, belonged to the Council. After a long and acrimonious debate, in which members of the Council protested that their freedom was being infringed upon,

the Central Conference, by a vote of 137-45 passed the following resolution:

While members of the CCAR are fully within their rights in espousing whatever philosophy of Jewish life they may accept; nevertheless, the American Council for Judaism, because of the special circumstances under which it came into being, has already endangered the unity of the Conference. Its continued existence would become a growing threat to our fellowship . . .

Therefore, without impugning the right of Zionists or non-Zionists to express and to disseminate their convictions within and without the Conference, we, in the spirit of amity, urge our colleagues of the American Council for Judaism to terminate this organization.

In certain respects, the issues were identical to the issues which were to agitate the Conference from 1971-1973 in respect to intermarriage. An equivocal request was made of a substantial number of colleagues to take an action on a matter of personal autonomy. The request was not accompanied by the suggestion of sanctions. The passage of the resolution recognized the existence of tension between personal freedom and the claims of Klal Yisroel and that, short of coercive measures, it was proper to define the limits of personal freedom in the moral, not the administrative, realm. The distinction between the moral and the administrative is significant because at no time did the Conference attempt to define a creedal position for its members, each of whom could continue to teach and advocate anything he pleased. Not long after the passage of the resolution on the American Council for Judaism, most of its Rabbinic members withdrew from that body. It is clear that Jewish and world events from 1943 to 1945 were taking a decisive hand. But the extent of the moral judgment of colleagues who had issued a request but not an ultimatum, should not be discounted. Whether the passage of the 1973 resolution on intermarriage will exert the same influence remains to be seen.

It is clear that in at least two critical issues, the Central Conference chose not to interpret personal freedom as implying the inherent right to unlimited freedom of action. It is also clear that, short of ethical or administrative but not halakhic violations, the Conference has deliberately chosen not to impose discipline. It has placed its confidence in the slower, but far less catastrophic, processes of debate and suasion, always accompanied by the omnipresent guest of the Jewish people, history.

The future of Reform Judaism, as of American Judaism, is speculative. One can note, with some justification, that while formal structures are being worked out, there seems to be a *de facto* receptivity by Reform Jews to the concept of, if not adherence to, a higher measure of a *mizvah* system, both in their personal and their collective lives. To have attained to the degree of receptivity is itself a *mizvah* which points further. Thus, the very keen sensitivity to the development of a new Prayer Book (*Shaaray Tefillah*) and a new *mazhor* (*Shaaray Teshuvah*), to be

opened, not incidentally, from right to left, is indicative. So is the response, in terms of volume of publication, to the Shabbat Guide. The growing number of Reform congregations which conduct Slihot Services in an idiom which is open to both the traditional liturgy and to new creativity, is a clue. The declaration by the Central Conference that Yom Azmaut and Yom Ha-Shoah are official days on our calendar, to be observed with appropriate liturgies; the recent decision by one congregation, at least, to observe the second day of Rosh Ha-Shanah as a sign of our *religious* link with the Jews in Israel; above all, the affirmative response by lay people to the call for a mizvah-system, reflect a new perception of Reform in which the tradition-based impulse appears to assert itself over its antinomian impulse.

This does not mean simplistically that Reform is becoming Conservative, as one segment of folk-wisdom would have it. It means that an identity struggle is at work in which the full outcome is yet to be determined, and the intermarriage issue is the most volatile manifestation of that struggle. While Reform is turning toward the tradition, it is also deeply committed not to be undifferentiatingly subservient to it, and it is equally committed to creating its own way which would become part of the traditional continuum. As long as it is rooted in the one, while grasping for the other, it will remain true to its objectives.

That segment of Reform Judaism which was conceived on the premise, among others, that "the times" warranted radical departure from tradition misread history. It continued, even into the first World War, to see the world in messianic constructs. Thus, in the year of America's entry into the War, the Central Conference declared, in justifying its opposition to joining the American Jewish Congress: "the Russian Revolution has radically altered the condition of our co-religionists in Russia, promising to secure the civil and religious rights of the Jews all the world over. . . ." If appeal to "the times" validated early Reform's restructuring of Jewish life, then the same premise would warrant an altogether different set of responses today. But there are those within Reform whose perceptions of history differ and who would, therefore, chart an altogether different course, predicated on the viability of a neo-messianic momentum in history. Thus, the internal struggle would continue unless it were resolved by new alignments not currently envisioned. It would appear that life should have persuaded us that the appeal to historic validation alone is a weak reed. The abiding issue is whether, fully recognizing the adaptational demands of history, we can abide as Jews in conformity to a higher mandate.

Reform Judaism— A Conservative Point of View

BENJAMIN Z. KREITMAN

REFORM JUDAISM HAD ITS BEGINNINGS IN THE early part of the nineteenth century in Germany, Austria and Hungary, but only in the United States did it make significant progress and meet with success. Here the open frontier, the exaltation of individual initiative, and the openness of the democratic process combined to produce a climate hospitable to the spirit of Reform Judaism. It was here that its changes, innovations and ideologies were structured, organized and institutionalized.¹ This Symposium takes note of the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, unquestionably one of the most important organizations in the constellation of Reform institutions developed on this continent.

From the perspective of calmer times, religiously speaking, the violent clashes of ideologies which marked the earlier years of Reform's development having now ebbed and gone, we can better appreciate its accomplishments and its contributions of thought and practice to the mainstream of Judaism. Despite the severe polemic accusations of the earlier years, we must immediately recognize that the early reformers, whether lay or rabbinic, had the high and sacred motivation of stemming the tide of the abandonment of Judaism. The reforms introduced both in practice and in thought—even those which we can now see as having been incompatible with Jewish experience and normative Jewish theology—helped to keep many within the bounds of Judaism and certainly deprived many others of their justifications for leaving the faith. Furthermore, in an age of accelerating optimism and hope, Reform theologians sought to translate the accepted perpetual tragic predicament of the Jew into the sublime terms of mission and calling. This new representation of the Jewish role among the nations must have helped many, embittered over their misfortune of being born Jews, to gain a new enthusiasm for their Judaism.

1. Albert Friedlander, *Early Reform Judaism in Germany, Early Reform Judaism in the United States* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1956).

David Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1967).

W. Gunther Plaut, *The Rise of Reform Judaism* (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1963).

—*The Growth of Reform Judaism* (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1965).

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What were the essential theological and philosophical premises upon which the new Reform practices were founded and the new institutions organized? During the course of these hundred years and before, in conventions, conferences and synods, the Reform movement was able to articulate its philosophy, describe its goals and define its distinguishing characteristics. Far from exhausting the new ideas and approaches of the Reform movement, the following, however, seem to have been its main guiding principles.

A. *The Mission Idea.* The Mission Idea, with its presuppositions and corollaries, had a revolutionary and pervasive influence on Reform attitudes and practices and belongs, therefore, in the very front rank of the new Reform theology. Linking itself to prophetic universalism and later messianic goals, Reform taught that within the people of Israel, whether seen as a "racial" entity or a community of faith, God has implanted unique qualities and drives upon which are borne the mission of bringing religious and ethical enlightenment to the gentile nations. A presupposition of the Mission Idea was the rejection of the nationhood of the Jewish people and the consequent surrender of all aspirations for national rehabilitation. In the scheme of the Mission Idea, the Jew was mandated to accept, without reservation, citizenship in the country of his residence. According to Reform doctrine, Mission and nationhood were declared contradictories in the table of Jewish values.

B. *The Right to Change Liturgy and Rituals.* Old rituals should be discontinued and new rituals and liturgy introduced in keeping with the spirit of the times and the needs of the day. Lest it be thought that adaptation to the times is a compromise of religious principles and loyalty, as claimed by the Orthodox, Samuel Hirsch offered the observation that "the need of the time is the highest law in Judaism."² Samuel Holdheim gave expression to the same thought in his introduction to the Berlin Prayerbook in which he noted that "the progressive revelation of God (is experienced) in all the ages, the present included."³

To bring historical evidence of the legitimacy of reform and change in Judaism, the researches of the Science of Judaism were invoked. In those early years the Science of Judaism was the handmaiden of Reform, but in time it became more closely allied with the new Positive-Historical school of Judaism.

C. *The Rejection of the Halakhah.* Despite the commanding position of the halakhah in Jewish thought and practice, Reform felt itself compelled to reject it in toto. Since the halakhah was looked upon as the source of Jewish particularism and separateness, it no longer had any place in the new design of Jewish emancipation. Moreover, given

2. Philipson, *Op. cit.*, p. 351.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 252-3, p. 8.

the modern setting of enlightenment and culture, the restrictive halakhah was no longer able to further the prophetic teachings of Judaism. One of the fathers of American Reform, Kaufman Kohler, skirted close to the Pauline attitude in saying that "the legalism of the halakhah was preventing the growth of the spiritual and ethical elements in Judaism."⁴ In relation to the halakhah, Abraham Geiger coined the apothegm, "*setirah al menat livnot*—tear down in order to build."⁵ In rejecting the halakhah, Reform had to dismantle the entire edifice of Judaism and then rebuild it. In the later history of Reform, up to but not including contemporary times, the attitude towards the halakhah has ranged from cold indifference to outright hostility.

Conservative Judaism is beholden to Reform both for its very being—for out of the challenge of Reform, Conservative Judaism was first born in Germany, in the form of the Positive-Historical school and then reborn as a movement on American soil—and, more profoundly, for many of the changes in ritual and synagogal practices which Reform pioneered and which Conservatism incorporated. Mixed or family pews, the recognition of women's rights in the synagogue and in religious practices, confirmations, consecration, the special role of the sermon in the services, and the inclusion of the beautiful as one of the dimensions of the holy—all first instituted by Reform—have by now become distinctive of Conservatism. *Mirabile dictu*, these innovations have also influenced the practices of modern Orthodoxy. Had Conservative Judaism been born without the assistance of Reform, it is doubtful whether any of these changes would have been accepted, at least not in their present form. To this very day Reform, wittingly or unwittingly, continues to be a stimulus to Conservatism to make further efforts to adjust practice to the needs of modern life.

The last forty years, however, have taken a heavy toll of the original Reform ideology and practice. Some of its fundamental doctrines have been dropped, modified, or completely reversed, and practices that at first appeared revolutionary are now considered outmoded. Most notable and most far reaching of these reversals has been the Reform attitude to Jewish nationhood. From the days of the Columbus Platform, official Reform has, with ever increasing intensity, affirmed and embraced Jewish nationhood. It need hardly be recalled that some of the most powerful spokesmen for Zionism in yesteryear were Reform rabbis, and among the militant supporters of Israel today are to be found leaders of the Reform movement, both rabbinic and lay. The acceptance of Jewish nationhood has now been so complete that Mordecai M. Kaplan

4. Kaufman Kohler, *Jewish Theology* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), pp. 351-2, pp. 45-47.

Mordecai M. Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization* (New York: Macmillan, 1935), p. 195.

5. Philipson, *Op. cit.*, p. 195.

has been hard put to find, in that regard, a difference between Reconstructionism and contemporary Reform, and he has suggested that it lies in the emphasis given to Israel's centrality: Reform looks upon Israel as *a* center of the Jewish spirit and culture, while Reconstructionism considers Israel as *the* center of the Jewish spirit and culture.⁶ One can not help but wonder whether, in terms of the Jewish experience, this is really a substantive distinction.

The Mission Idea, which had been linked to the negation of the concept of Jewish nationhood, is now given an altogether different stress. In the early years of Reform, the Mission Idea had replaced ethnic and national loyalties as the purpose of Jewish existence. With the affirmation of Jewish nationhood, the Mission Idea became a function of nationhood approximating Reconstructionism's concept of Ethical Nationhood. There is yet another compelling reason for a revision of this idea, which had its origin in, and was linked with, eighteenth and nineteenth century evolutionism and optimism. The twentieth century has cast gloomy doubts on these earlier untroubled hopes and expectations. Early Reform exalted the spirit of the age to the point where Samuel Holdheim saw it as a bearer of God's revelation, but disillusionment and despair in the wake of the Holocaust, and the bitter experience of seeing the reemergence of anti-Semitism in the midst of other racial hostilities, have so altered the spirit of this age that it bears more the signs of God's eclipse than of His revelation. The spirit of the age can no longer be a slogan for Reform as it tries to keep pace with the times.

In Reform, as well as in other sectors of the religious community, Jewish as well as non-Jewish, a nostalgic yearning for the past has set in. Old rituals have been resurrected and cultivated with the hope of reproducing the spirit of our fathers and of our fathers' times. We have witnessed rabbis and laymen unquestionably identified as Reform and yet garbed in *tallit* and *tefillin*, seeking the experience of Jewish piety. For them the ancient bears the marks of authenticity, and keeping pace with the times means a return to the old.

As the Union of American Hebrew Congregations turns now to the next hundred years, the only principle that has remained of the original doctrines and premises of Reform is the principle of the right to change, that Judaism should constantly adjust itself to the needs of life. Important as the principle was and continues to be, it can hardly, by itself, sustain a religious movement. Even in this open and permissive society, or maybe because of it, there is a growing quest for permanence which runs parallel to the search for authenticity and identity. It would seem that there is nothing deadlier to the religious spirit than the unrelieved

6. Mordecai M. Kaplan, *The Greater Judaism in the Making* (New York: Reconstructionist Press), p. 308 ff.

excitement of novelty. How long can rituals and synagogue forms keep on changing without becoming sentimental ephemera? In Rabbinic Judaism the ceremonial halakhah gave the worshipper identity, purpose, a sense of unity with his fellow Jews, and the feeling of being linked with that which is unchanging in life. Changes did take place, even great changes, but they came within, and through, the halakhah. Studies emanating from the Science of Judaism have shed much light on the way the halakhah was able to sustain change. It is regrettable that, in the post-emancipation period, the spokesmen for Rabbinic Judaism, fearful of the threats of western culture to the integrity of tradition and community, felt themselves compelled to oppose any new ideas or proposals of adjustments, however legitimate they were halakhically. It is attributed to the Ḥatam Sofer that he quipped, "*Ḥadash asur min ha-Torah*—The Torah prohibits anything that is new." In great part, because of this polemical zeal, the early reformers went to the other extreme and declared the halakhah itself as being an impediment to progress and modernity. But Reform has by now made its point. It can now afford to seek a reconciliation with the halakhah. Solomon B. Freehof, who has enriched the general halakhic literature of our day, has urged this step upon his colleagues in the Reform rabbinate, saying, "The time is at hand when we should attempt to rediscover our inherent kinship with the Jewish legal system."⁷

Reform must find its way back to the halakhah for yet another reason, even more urgent than the benefits coming from the ceremonial law. This reason issues from Reform's affirmation of Jewish nationhood. We return to the age-old question—what makes one a member of the Jewish nation or people? Is it a matter of birth, a declaration of kinship or a profession of faith? Surprisingly—to our modern ears—the early reformers who rejected Jewish nationhood and yet wanted to preserve the Jewish community, turned to the idea of race. For them, the preservation of racial integrity replaced national loyalty. Gunther Plaut summed up this thinking in these words: "What made the Jew capable of carrying his burden? It was a special *racial characteristic*, (*italics mine*), an inherited innate ability to see the world in spiritual terms."⁸ The reformers who followed out this thinking were unalterably opposed to any kind of intermarriage because it would dilute the innate racial characteristics of the Jew. In this frame of thought, opposition to intermarriage meant opposition to marriages even with converts to Judaism. Surely racial identity can in no way be accepted today as a foundation of Jewish nationhood. True, the Jew as a national or ethnic entity traces his

7. Solomon B. Freehof, *Reform Judaism and the Legal Tradition* (New York: Association of Reform Rabbis of New York City and Vicinity, 1961), p. 8.

8. Plaut, *Rise of Reform*, Introduction, p. xvii.

Kaplan, *Greater Judaism*, quotes Emil G. Hirsch: "Judaism is racial, tribal, national and universal . . . without race we ossify in dogma" (p. 292).

descent from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But this sense of ethnic origin is not racial in that non-Jews are admitted through *giyur* (conversion) to the ethnic fold of the Jew. The common descent of the Jew is really an halakhic construct. It is analogous to the legal construct of adoption where, through a juridical procedure, the child is looked upon as having been born of the adoptive parents. Similarly, the convert, through uniform, accepted halakhic procedures, takes upon himself the identity, history and destiny of the adoptive Jewish nation. Jewish nationhood is, in essence, founded upon a halakhic construct. Take away the halakhic substructure of Jewish nationhood and we are left with an open-ended, monotheistic, quasi-national denomination. Given such a loose-fitting conglomeration, mixed marriage should not only be tolerated but even encouraged, particularly with those coming from other monotheistic denominations.⁹ In one of his earliest writings, Mordecai Kaplan had predicted this end to the Reform premises, at least to those that do not insist on the racial character of the Jewish entity: "Sooner or later, Reformism will be driven to accept the logical conclusion of its basic assumption that Judaism is essentially the God-idea in its truest form, and permit intermarriage (mixed marriage in the more exact terminology of today)."¹⁰ How long can we keep on struggling to survive under these circumstances? Though we can no longer accept some of his terms of reference, David Einhorn's warning is more appropriate to our day than to his in the beginnings of American Reform: "To lend a hand to the sanctification of mixed marriage is, according to my conviction, to furnish a nail to the coffin of the small Jewish race, with its sublime mission."¹¹ It is ironic that in this period, when Reform has fully embraced the concept of Jewish nationhood, a substantial number of Reform rabbis are sanctifying mixed marriages, even joining with Christian clergymen in officiating at these ceremonies. This contradiction rises out of the contemporary Reform dilemma: the racial theory of Jewish descent can no longer be countenanced and the halakhah, which defines Jewish nationhood, is still spurned. It is imperative for the Reform movement to re-evaluate its position on the halakhah, particularly on the halakhah of Jewish identity, conversion, and mixed marriage, for the sake of securing the survival of the Jewish people. In the future, the two sectors of the community that are halakhically oriented, the Orthodox and the Conservative, will not be able to keep intact the halakhic structure of Jewish nationhood without the cooperation of Reform. This structure will grow ever weaker, even to the point of collapse, if this major segment of the Jewish population continues to disregard it. Given the openness

9. M. Mielziner, *Jewish Law of Marriage and Divorce* (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1901), p. 47 ff.

10. Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, p. 119.

11. Mielziner, *Op. cit.*, p. 52.

and mobility of contemporary American society, all the segments and divisions of the Jewish community are interdependent, reacting one upon the other and influencing one the other. The recent action of the New York Board of Rabbis ousting those rabbis who sanctify mixed marriages was not a matter of coercion or of supervening authority, as simplistically seen by some of its critics. It was a recognition, so painfully reached, that in a matter of transcending importance, the survival of the Jewish people, no segment of the Jewish population can continue to "go it" alone.

Should Reform now come to terms with the halakhah, what will distinguish it from Conservative Judaism? After all, Conservatism, too, has adopted the principle of change, admittedly spurred on by Reform, and is certainly committed to the halakhah. Laying aside institutional and organizational loyalties, these two movements with a common approach to change, both sharing a loyalty to the Jewish nation and a commitment to the halakhah could very easily merge. Joined together, they could present a strengthened, unified and realistic option to Orthodoxy, in this country as well as in Israel. But institutional and organizational loyalties having a life of their own, we dare seek to define the distinctive character of a Reform halakhic movement, should it emerge. Solomon Freehof has already suggested this definition, albeit tentatively, of a Reform halakhah, "for our guidance and not our governance."¹² These two categories juxtaposed—governance and guidance—could be productive of new developments. Reconstructionism suggested, a while back, the idea of a guide to Jewish practice instead of the halakhah of Jewish practice. In doing so it placed "guide" and "halakhah" in opposition to each other. Freehof has amply demonstrated, in his many volumes on Reform Responsa, that an halakhic approach to ritual and to practice is possible under the category of "guidance." This approach, however, is yet tentative and personal. Reform needs now to make an official commitment to the halakhah as its source of "guidance." Conservatism, by contrast, would continue to follow the halakhah as "governance," implying the interaction of authority, obedience and discipline. It is to be hoped that the reciprocal influences of the "governance" and "guidance" approaches to the halakhah would restore it to being a vital part of Jewish life. In the area, however, of Jewish nationhood, which transcends all denominational and organizational divisions, Reform would have to join Orthodoxy and Conservatism in accepting the halakhah as "governance."

It is singularly appropriate that these words, noting the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, end with the prayer that the next hundred years may be as productive and as fruitful as the first.

12. Freehof, *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

Reform Judaism: An Insider's Evaluation

ARTHUR J. LELYVELD

THE REFORM MOVEMENT IN JUDAISM WAS A rebellion against the Jewish establishment. Like all rebellions, it was stubbornly opposed. The entrenched rabbinical leadership used every weapon available to it to crush Reform at its birth: vilification, ostracism, excommunication and even *malshinut* to bring about the intervention of the government.

Nourished by the glimpses of freedom and echoes of enlightenment that made their way into the fortress of rabbinic Judaism as the nineteenth century dawned, Reform attacked the status quo at the same historic moment as did Hasidism and Haskalah. The very same weapons were trained on these other upstarts: Hasidism's struggle may be vividly characterized by the scandal of Shneur Zalman in a Russian jail; Haskalah's by the banning and even the burning of books—even Hebrew books—that smacked of “secular heresy” or suggested a “scientifically” critical approach to traditional literature.

Rebellions do not explode out of nothing. They are a response to stubborn authority and repressiveness, and they are ignited by frustration. A tightly-lidded steam chamber with no escape valve must, at some point, blow. There were increasing numbers of Jews, who, in the words of Eliezer Schweid transposed to an earlier era, “were not prepared to define their Jewishness in terms of the traditional sources and in accordance with the way of life that had been fashioned on the authority of those sources.”

They were not so prepared because through the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the “masters of the halakhah” had become increasingly rigid and authoritarian. They barricaded themselves behind an enforced humility. “Are you wiser and a greater *lamdan* than the last of the *Poskim*?” And unless you think you are, how can you dare to make changes in the halakhah or to set up your reinterpretations against established doctrine? It would take great *huzpah* or rare power to stand against this attitude. Few did. The ever-flowing stream, that stemmed from the developmental attitude and the tolerance for minority opinions that had been the hall-marks of Pharisaic Judaism, was dammed by obduracy and dwindled to a trickle.

Jewish thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was stultified and stagnant. It was bogged down in the misuse of *pilpul*, it

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retrogressed into thaumaturgy, superstition and false Messiah movements, it repressed the Mendelssohnian first glimmerings of enlightenment. It would be absurd to neglect the fact that there was an abundance of intellectual activity. But all of it was confined in the narrow frame of the four ells of halakhah. "Judaism," said Abraham Geiger, "was in that diseased state which befalls any group long secluded and inaccessible to the influence of general progress."

Establishment Orthodoxy opposed not only the scientific-critical approach to the study of the Bible, but even the critical study of Talmud, which would distinguish errata and distortions in tradition, was rigorously outlawed. Indeed, Orthodox apologists, even in the nineteenth century, exalted the proscription of innovation into a principle by citing as a general rule a Talmudic *ma-amar* which, in context, has an entirely different and specific application: *He-hadash asur min ha-Torah*—The new is forbidden by the Torah (Kiddushin 38b). They deliberately ignored the fact that in the discussion in which this apothegm occurs, *hadash* means solely and particularly new grains or cereals and not "everything that is new."

This attitude to the tradition, which regards it as complete and final, and sees any innovation as inadmissible, is logically fulfilled only in isolation, in enclave-living such as that of the *Neturei Karta*. It meant withdrawal from the shared culture of the times and a mummification of what had been the living, inquiring openness of normative rabbinic Judaism. It meant, quite simply, the death of all spiritual creativity.

Against this sealed-off view, Reform proclaimed the Jewish demand for freedom of inquiry and receptiveness to new insights. It insisted on what it called "scientific" treatment of our history and our literature as part of that quest for truth essential to organic development. It called—in a word which is a favorite of our time—for relevance. It sought the regeneration of a dynamic Judaism which would break down the walls, physical and spiritual, that were hemming in the Jewish people. Abraham Geiger summed up the new spirit by calling for an end to the dichotomy between religion and the actual daily life of the Jew. That meant, of course, changing religion and not changing the style of daily life.

This was the motivation to Reform expressed by many of its early exponents. They wanted change "not that we might make life more comfortable but that we might better fulfil our duties . . ." Again and again, they sought traditional support for their break with forms which they considered outmoded. The vast majority of them rejected any attitude that would make of them a new sect; they clung firmly to the body of the household of Israel and with equal firmness to their share in its history. "The intention of the law," said Michael Creizenach of Frankfurt, "was that the Israelite ritual system should never sink into

the state of an old, amorphous mass of stone, but rather that it preserve itself with everlasting vitality and that it develop continually according to the needs, circumstances and educational levels of succeeding generations."

The Reform movement also spawned extremists. Every revolution does. There were those who reduced their Jewish expression to a bland, prophetic universalism, a church in the mould of Western Protestantism, throwing overboard in the name of salvaging the ship some of its most precious baggage: the Hebrew language with its gems of prayer-poetry, the color and richness of custom and ceremony, the rabbinic insistence that *kiddush ha-hayyim* applied to the lived moment in the every-day as well as Sabbath and Holy Day. But the normative center of the movement rejected the advocates of radical reform.

Ironically, the Jewish world judged Reform by these very radicals, the Mosaists, the *Reformgemeinde* in Berlin which, they joked, proclaimed its purpose over its gates: "*Pithu sh'arim v'yavo goy*, they read the verse. *Zedek shomer emunim*—Open the gates and let the 'goy' enter, the righteous will keep the faith!"

There is a parallel between the early Christian view of Judaism as presented in the Gospels, the *mitnagdic* view of Hasidism, and the view of Reform perpetuated by its opponents. Polemical literature always seizes on the least creditable manifestation of the movement it opposes. But Reform, like any other movement, should not be judged by its extremes or by the foolishness of some of its adherents. The Reform Judaism of Abraham Geiger has little in common with the quasi-Christian antics of David Friedlaender; the Reform of Bernard Felsenthal and Gustav Gottheil was worlds apart from the "Mosaism" of Adolph Moses of Louisville or the extremisms of Samuel Holdheim of Berlin; the sturdy Jewish loyalty of Abba Hillel Silver and Stephen Samuel Wise had only a tenuous organizational link with the anti-Zionism of Solomon Foster and those whom Maurice Samuel once called the "Foster-children of Israel."

Fairminded critics will judge a movement, not by caricatures or by its popular image, but by its intentions and its achievements. The intention of Reform was to conserve, to keep Jews within the fold. Its goal was to build a community of Jews who, possessing a deep knowledge of their past would bring increased vitality to their religious life and help usher in a world of justice and peace for all men. We are, therefore, entitled to ask: to what extent did it halt the defection of young Jews? Has Reform been truly innovative and creative? Has it in any degree served the goal of *tikkun olam* which is central in Judaism?

Stemming defection, wrote Gunther Plaut, was "not the movement's most precious jewel" but it was not its smallest achievement either. There are those who were, and are, accustomed to condemn Reform as

having encouraged assimilation and defection. They mistake the effect for the cause. Reform Judaism was the *result* of a hemorrhagic rise of assimilation and defection. It came into being as, among other initial reasons, an effort to staunch that flow. Many, like Gerson-Lévy of France, saw Jews abandoning Judaism altogether and warned that "in all the great cities our religion is threatened by complete dissolution . . . Wait still another half-century and Reform will not longer be necessary, for indifference will have won the upper hand."

Because public worship was neglected, because increasing numbers of Jews were ignorant of Hebrew, because of the fact that survivalist Jews saw the young leaving the Jewish community in alarming numbers, the Reformers felt obliged to "search everywhere to create for (their) children a defense against the invasion of irreligion."

Their efforts cannot be considered a failure. The Reform synagogue in the United States, celebrating its centennial, is numerically strong, possessing its own institutions and organs of Jewish scholarship, producing Jewish leaders and thinkers in not inconsiderable numbers, and maintaining its strong participation in *k'lal Yisrael*. This is affirmed by students of Jewish life outside the movement, among them Robert Gordis, who in his book, *Conservative Judaism*, writes "Reform . . . has also proved in large measure to be a constructive force helping to preserve loyalty to Judaism in the modern world . . . it helped bring the Jewish heritage once more into the mainstream of human progress."

The very principle of change and adaptability which is its core enabled Reform to survive the cataclysmic overturns our era has witnessed. Born in an age of halcyon optimism founded on confidence in man's ability to use the new tool of science for the solution of all his problems, it was plunged into an era in which it had to come to terms with the reality of human depravity. From an age presided over by the great systematizers and then by Darwin, Huxley and Spencer, it moved into an age of Freud, Heidegger, Sartre and the death of God. From emancipation and the yearning for the "parliament of man" it was shaped, tempered and refined by holocaust and redemption.

Much that was important when the movement began seems trivial and naive today. Uncovering the head and preferring the vernacular for worship were symbols to the nineteenth-century militants. We are not really very different from our Protestant neighbors, they were proclaiming by this defiant act, but, by Heaven, we *are* different from you Jews in skull-caps and prayer-shawls whose mode of worship is alien to the democracy in which we live. But today there is scarcely a Reform synagogue in which one cannot note the increasing presence of *kipot* and even an occasional *tallit*. As for the Hebrew language, it is once again an "in" thing, and both prayer and congregational response in Hebrew make inroads day after day into the previously sacred precincts of English.

The motivation is the exact opposite of that of our early Reform forebears. We *are* different from our Protestant neighbors but, by Heaven, we are *one* with our fellow-Jews. How much this is the result of the resurgence of ethnic pluralism and ethnic identity, or how much of the renaissance of Jewish nationalism and the birth of Israel contributed to that resurgence and the new pride of Jewish identity is a question to be studied by tomorrow's historians—but its effect on the Reform movement has been evident.

There is probably truth to the contention that American Reform, in particular, was reshaped by the influx of East European Jews and their children who brought into the somewhat antiseptic Temple the warmth and *heimishness* of their background, the affirmativeness of their Zionism, and the intellectual quest of Haskalah. They flocked to Reform, not because they liked organ music or “silent devotion,” but because this was frequently the only address to which they could go that would afford them that room to swing their arms which they demanded. Without Reform and the freedom it gave them, they might have left the Synagogue altogether.

My personal experience with Reform Judaism is a kind of spiritual “ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny.” As a child in a Manhattan Reform congregation, I imbibed the ideology of the unrevised Union prayerbook. Judaism was a national, universalist religion with a mission to bring peace and justice to all mankind. At college, I argued the mission-theory with Abraham Halkin, my teacher, and with Zionist fellow-students. “Mission!” they jibed, “You mean *mischen*—a *zu-mischen of milchig and fleishig!*” Naively, with the optimism of the pre-1933 era, they argued that the universal ideals of peace and justice were already the possession of all men. The “Jewish problem” was what needed solution, and that required the normalization of Jewish life through the recognition of Jewish peoplehood and the reestablishment of the Jewish nation on its own soil in Erez Yisrael. Paradoxically, my own naive view of a universal mission led me to affirm the existence of evil that still required the struggle of the Jewish prophetic spirit. I had to learn how I could blend the two, the struggle for social righteousness with the fact of Jewish peoplehood and the validity of Jewish nationalism, before I could become a Zionist. Since the Isaianic visions of “*Ki mizion . . .*” and “*b’rit am . . . or lagoyim*” were frequently affirmed by small “g” general Zionism, the transition was ultimately accomplished.

This was an unsophisticated, youthful version of the ideological dilemma that has been the chief preoccupation of the Reform rabbinate from the beginning. The theoretical conception of the role of the people of Israel in the history of mankind, which was undeniably part of the outlook of the emancipated nineteenth-century Jew, had come to terms

with the realities of Jewish life in the midst of the disillusionment which history brought.

At the very first meeting of the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1890, the Reform rabbinate was almost split by the effort to pass a declaration stating that Jews are to be defined as a "religious community only." The declaration was defeated. And the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, commonly regarded as the ultimate expression of "classical Reform" and which had proclaimed "We consider ourselves no longer a nation but a religious community" and, therefore, do not "expect . . . a return to Palestine," was never adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis. It was proposed for adoption, but after heated debate the Conference deliberately refrained from accepting it.

What was behind this division, and expressed itself again and again in the decades that followed, was the strong will of the center of the movement to hold fast both to the peoplehood of Israel ("I dread the danger of alienation," said Jacob Voorsanger in 1902) and to the ideal of a prophetic task to seek the establishment of God's kingdom for all men. It was a long road from the resolution with which American Reform rabbis greeted the First Zionist Congress ("We totally disapprove of any attempt for the establishment of a Jewish State.") to the 1962 statement with which they hailed the State of Israel with joy and gratitude. But the idea that Reform or its rabbis were ever totally anti-Zionist is a myth. Not only the affirmation of peoplehood which was made even by non-Zionists, but the support of a Jewish state enlisted important Reform leadership through the entire seven decades. Here the freedom of individual thought, which is a first principle of Liberalism, was tested and survived, echoing the Talmudic "*Elu v'elu*—both these and these are the words of the living God." A more important testing was that of the capacity of Reform to adapt to a changing world and to unprecedented and unforeseen circumstances. The necessity to meet both tests generated an intellectual ferment, the products of which are even today reshaping Reform and affecting the thought of *k'lal Yisrael*. Reform writings today are heartening evidence of the living meaningfulness of Judaism. Contemporary Reform thinkers take Judaism seriously—not just Biblical or rabbinic Judaism, but the whole range of historic Jewish thought.

Out of the long years of the debate on universalism and particularism and out of the influence of the children of Haskalah on the Reform synagogue itself there came another significant development. This was the fact that Mordecai Kaplan's redefinition of Judaism as the total historic experience of the Jewish people found wide acceptance in Reform ranks because the ground had already been well prepared. Four decades later, Eugene Borowitz testifies to the "virtual unanimity" among Re-

form Jewish thinkers today on the obligation of the Jew to participate "in the ongoing activity . . . of the Jewish people as a whole."

Universalism/particularism was but one of the dilemmas that plagued early Reform. Another, of tearing import, was the old dilemma of the one and the many, the individual and the community. For the liberal, the individual conscience is the court of last resort and the right to dissent is man's most precious right. The implications of this stance for the entire inherited code of *mizvot* is shattering. Who is to determine what God demands and what God does not demand if not the individual standing alone before Him? Unless the Pentateuch is unreservedly the revealed word of God, what conscientious basis is there for avoiding a mixture of linen and wool in one's garment? The Reform outlook was not the *hefkerut* of unadulterated individualism, however. From the very beginning of the movement, the effort to hold on to both horns of the dilemma was a central task. The individual conscience had to include responsibility to the group, and loyalty to the people of Israel was incumbent on the individual Jew. The early pronouncements of the movement and the statements of its rabbis and leaders reflected that recognition of paradox effectively expressed many years later by Martin Buber: only I can decide what is and what is not demanded of me—"My group cannot relieve me of this responsibility" but I must find my way "to that responsibility armed with all the 'ought' that has been forged in the group. . . ."

Individual freedom cannot be divorced from individual responsibility which, in turn, must be exercised in relation to the group that is the source of the "ought." *Mizvah*, as it appears in Jewish thought and as it was defined by Hasdai Crescas, can exist only when there is freedom of choice: the *mizvah* is in your heart and in your mouth for you to do it, for life and death, blessing and curse have been set before you and it is up to *you* to choose life.

This is the crux of the perennial liberal problem. The individual is the free-deciding agent. But Reform has never accorded to the individual conscience full and final authority. Nor has Reform, as has been charged, delegated authority to human agencies. Rather, it has found its difference in its conviction that the Divine demand speaking through the group to the individual must be confronted anew in every lived moment. The dilemma this poses will not be resolved by the creation of a new, authoritative Reform *halakhah* as some suggest, but rather by a return to the pristine meaning of *mizvah* as the expressed will of God. For the liberal Jew, the will of God is not expressed in cultic practices any more than it was so expressed for the eighth-century prophets. Ceremony is precious to us because our folk-practices add color to our lives and are the re-enforcers and preservers and carriers of *mizvah*. But ritual and ceremony are not expressions of God's will and, therefore,

cannot be *mizvah*. *Mizvah*, for the liberal, must be those demands that have to do with the relations "between man and man—*bayn adam l'havayro*." Reform Judaism has operated on that view by giving primary place to the social or interpersonal *mizvot*: love thy neighbor, compassion for the stranger, preserving the sanctity of life, protecting the human rights of all men to labor and to the fruits of labor, and to the fulfillment of their human potential.

This is why social action has been a unique emphasis in Reform Judaism. We are not just to pray for *tikkun olam*, the improvement of our world, we are to engage in those actions that will help bring it about. Judaism is not something to be cloistered in synagogue and school. It must be brought out into the streets. It must grapple with the affairs of state. Therefore, Reform has emphasized prophetic religion and by that emphasis has influenced toward engagement in society the other religious forces of the Western world.

These considerations help set the nature of Judaism's task for the last quarter of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. Those aspects of our tradition which are most vital to ourselves and mankind because they are the determinants of value, the moral and social *mizvot*, are given too little attention by establishment Orthodoxy. They are, as Abba Eban has said of them, "Israel's original values." He asks,

Will the temptations of parochialism and apathy be overcome by appeal to a Jewish legacy which is universal in space and eternal in time. The tension between national particularity and broad universal vision runs through the whole of Jewish history. Israel's task is not to ensure the total eclipse of one by the other, but to bring them together in creative alliance.

Eban is speaking of the State of Israel, but his statement of task applies with equal force to the people of Israel and its religion. The "universal vision" will be preserved only by the living religion of Israel.

A living Judaism must also strive to meet two of the major psychic needs of modern man: the need for a well-founded sense of identity and the need for the assurance that his life has meaning. These antidotes to alienation and nihilism can grow organically out of the historic experience of the Jewish people. Dynamic and experimental, living Judaism must not lose touch with the community of Israel. Liberal and in tune with modern thought, it must nonetheless make room for theism, holding fast to the Rock of Israel.

This hope and expectation grow out of the basic conviction that the values of Judaism are needed in our world, that values are group-generated, and that without anchorage in that which is absolute and enduring they must wind down and disappear. Hence, both the Jewish group experience and the search for God must be preserved.

These affirmations are descriptive of the central quest of Reform Judaism and, fundamentally, they represent the central quest of historic Judaism. If the Reform movement has, in any measure, helped lead the Jewish people out of its seventeenth-century isolation and back toward its central task, then it has not been void of accomplishment. Reform Judaism will remain viable as long as it retains these two major characteristics: its capacity to continue to change, adapting itself to the shifts of time and circumstance; and its organic unity with the people of Israel and its covenant task. It may cease to be called "Reform" but I know few members of our movement who would bemoan the loss of that barbarism. What is important is the principle of development in Judaism—the service of the goals of Judaism in the manner appropriate to every age of what the Union Prayer Book calls Israel's "changeeful career"—cherishing the past as essential to staying on course as we seek to move into the future. This task of propagating a living and relevant Judaism is one in which Reform must join hands with like-minded Conservative, Reconstructionist and modern traditional Jews. Indeed, such adjectives as Reform, Liberal, Progressive, Reconstructionist and Conservative must disappear when all who recognize the central importance of both growth and faithfulness unite in the synagogue of the future.

The American Reform Rabbi Today

DAVID S. HACHEN

LEGEND HAS IT THAT RABBI SCHNEUR ZALMAN, one of the great Hasidic rabbis of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was imprisoned in St. Petersburg on false charges. While awaiting trial, he was visited by the chief of police, a thoughtful man. Struck by the quiet majesty of the rabbi's appearance and demeanor, the official engaged him in conversation, asking a number of questions that had puzzled him in reading the Bible. Their discussion turned to the story of the Garden of Eden. "Why was it," the official asked, "that a God who was all-knowing had to call out when Adam was hiding and ask him, 'Where are you?'"

"You do not understand the meaning of the question," the rabbi answered. "This is a question God asks of every man in every generation. After all your wanderings, after all your efforts, after all your years, O man, where are you?"¹

This tale applies to the condition in which the American Reform rabbi finds himself today. "Where are you?" So appropriate is this question that a major study was undertaken by Theodore I. Lenn and Associates to attempt to discover what members of the Central Conference of American Rabbis were thinking and feeling as the Reform Movement celebrates this centennial anniversary and as liberal Jews look toward the twenty-first century. "Where are you?"—rabbis of the Central Conference. "Where are you?"—spiritual leaders of more than a million American Jews. "Where are you?"—wives of the rabbis. "Where are you?"—students of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, rabbis of the future.

Despite disclaimers from a number of rabbis, professors and rabbinical students, it is the thesis of this paper that the American Reform rabbi today is a troubled man. He (and now, she, as well) is caught in a series of conflicts which cannot help but result in confusion, anxiety and alienation. This statement will be documented in the hope that once rabbis and laymen alike see the difficulties with which the religious leader is confronted, they might together be able to begin to find real solutions which will be of an abiding nature.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

The Lenn Report begins with this question: "To the extent that any malaise exists in American Reform Judaism, how might it be identified

1. M. Greer and B. Rubinstein, *Will the Real Teacher Please Stand Up?* (Pacific Palisades: Goodyear Publishing Co., 1972), p. 215.

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and assessed by a study of the attitudes and behavior of today's American Reform rabbinate?"² Such a malaise does exist and the proof is manifold. It can be seen primarily in the attitudes and decisions of rabbis and future rabbis. Daniel Jeremy Silver, citing as his source, Malcolm Stern, Director of Placement for the CCAR, states "that nearly half of those ordained at the HUC-JIR are not now serving as congregational rabbis."³ Moreover, in response to the question: "Do seminarians want to be pulpit rabbis?" Dr. Lenn concludes: "Most seminary students are by no means determined to become pulpit rabbis . . . indeed less than half definitely plan to do so."⁴

The explanation for this phenomenon can be found in "Placement—a Depth Report" prepared by Malcolm Stern for the January, 1972 issue of the *CCAR Journal*. There he points out the following: The Conference has grown by 86 members in the past four years, while all the congregations served by CCAR rabbis have absorbed a net growth of only four additional rabbis in the same four years. It is, therefore, evident that the congregational rabbinate as currently constituted is close to saturation (p. 24). In discussing pulpit prospects, he says: "Unless and until the economy improves we are going to be facing a declining job market" (p. 27). There are many who believe that even with an upturn in the economy, the American Reform rabbi is facing a declining job market, especially in the position of pulpit rabbi.

However, the declining number of congregational positions available, though significant, is not the sole determinant when one seeks an explanation of the fact that nearly half of the Reform rabbis are not now serving congregations and more than half of those who are studying to become rabbis are planning not to serve as pulpit rabbis. In the view of many, the real reason that many rabbis are turning away from congregations is that in the congregation they feel isolated and alone. For some, this means barriers between themselves and their institutions. For some, this means walls of competition and mistrust between themselves and their colleagues. For some, this means a role-conflict within themselves. And for some it means a chasm of "Jewish distance" between themselves and their congregants. This alienation, brought on by conflict and distance, is the most severe disease of modern man, and the American Reform rabbi today is no exception, suffering sometimes with cries of pain, but often in silence. Accompanying this feeling of being cut off come all the anxieties and frustrations normally associated with it.

2. Theodore I. Lenn, *Rabbi & Synagogue in Reform Judaism* (New York: CCAR, 1972), p. 4. (Hereafter referred to as Lenn Report.)

3. David Jeremy Silver, "Symposium on the Qualifications of a Rabbi," *CCAR Journal*, Jan. 1972, p. 2.

4. Lenn Report, p. 329.

INSTITUTIONAL DISTANCE

Sad though it be, it appears that most of the congregational rabbis feel as though they stand alone. They feel that they do not receive the support which they need from the CCAR, the UAHC, and the HUC-JIR. As Dr. Lenn reports, there is dissatisfaction in the whole area of rabbinic economics: salaries, increments, vacations, insurance benefits, tenure, pension benefits, and sabbaticals. "Not only do many rabbis not understand what is going on, they aren't even clear on what *should* be going on . . . It is the *system*, the arrangements, the procedures that distress the rabbis more than the actual dollars involved."⁵ According to the Lenn Report, it would appear that some members of the Conference feel that the UAHC is a hierarchy whose leadership has not always had their best interests at heart. One rabbi felt that the UAHC's primary responsibility was to the lay leaders. Despite the valiant efforts of the UAHC President-elect, Alexander Schindler, and the Regional Rabbis, it would appear that there are questions in the minds of some men. Those who are caught in the vise of a competitive society and a competitive rabbinate and are confronted with a declining job market tend to blame either the UAHC or the CCAR. What they do not know and can never know is that many of the UAHC's Regional Rabbis do act on their behalf, but are forced to do so in such a way that their efforts can never be known to the colleague himself.

The distance between a rabbi and the UAHC is only a fraction of the distance between that same rabbi and the Conference. Despite CCAR Regional meetings, the annual CCAR Conference, the activism of the CCAR Executive Vice-President, Joseph Glaser, and a newsletter which reaches the members of the Conference regularly, rabbis feel that quite often the CCAR is just another part of the system and not able to help them in times of real stress. One of the serious problems is that, although most of the members of the Conference recognize the compassionate and sincere efforts made on their behalf by the Director of Placement, they find it difficult, at times, to talk openly and freely with him, because, by the very nature of his position, he represents authority. It appears that one man holds the power of placement in his hands and, by a single word spoken or unspoken, controls another's life and the life of his family.

Despite friendships which exist between pulpit rabbis and their colleagues who are members of the faculty of the HUC-JIR, and despite a new program of continuing education recently undertaken by the HUC-JIR in conjunction with the CCAR, many of the men in the Conference feel rather hostile toward HUC-JIR. Much of this feeling

5. T. Lenn, "Reform Judaism: a Religious System or a Local Temple Experience?" Address, CCAR, June 13, 1972, p. 43. (Hereafter referred to as Lenn Address.)

goes back to the days when the rabbi was a student at the seminary. He felt then, like some students today, strongly antagonistic to the institutions of Reform. This anger is focused largely on the College-Institute. Dr. Lenn states that "in 25 years of survey research, . . . (he) had not been exposed, from *any* population sample, to the castigating and destructive comments that even begin to be commensurate with the outpouring of criticism that comes from close to 50% of our seminarian sample." Sylvan Schwartzman, in reacting to the Lenn report, correctly points out, however, that the College-Institute is not the same institution that its alumni once attended. It is not even the same institution that it was two or three years ago.

The personnel, curriculum, academic procedures, facilities, even the folklore, are no longer the same. Just look at the present curriculum in the Cincinnati School, starting with a first year taken in Israel, and with only nineteen required core courses out of a total of forty-three that can be selected in almost any order.⁷

Yet, despite these and other disclaimers by Dr. Schwartzman, and despite the genuine affection that the majority of the students at the College-Institute have for its relatively new President, Alfred Gottschalk, students still find many deficiencies at the College. Although David Eli Vorspan, President of the HUC-JIR Student Body in Cincinnati, chastises his fellow students for many of the problems at the College, he is forced to admit that at HUC one finds

little religious atmosphere, poorly developed curriculum, minimally required academic level, disastrous pedagogic techniques, and so on. One need only read the Lenn report to realize that HUC may be doing more harm than good.⁸

Disenchantment with the College-Institute appears not to be limited only to seminarians and those rabbis who are least satisfied with their careers; many men in the Conference feel a lingering ambivalence toward the College and its professors.

What is, however, of greatest importance, says Roland Gittelsohn, is that

the psychiatric consultants to the Lenn Study confirmed our presentiment that the antagonisms we aim at our Boards of Trustees and our national institutions are often convenient camouflage for our own feelings of inadequacy or frustration.⁹

If this is true, then the seeds of the malaise lie elsewhere, and the distance which members of the Conference sense between themselves and their institutions is only the result of something deeper and more disturbing.

6. Lenn Report, p. 319 f.

7. Sylvan Schwartzman, "The Religious Vacuum," *CCAR Journal*, Winter, 1973, p. 14.

8. David Eli Vorspan, "Should Seminarians Share in the Blame?" *Ibid.*, p. 19.

9. Roland B. Gittelsohn, "The Voice of Every Member," *Ibid.*, p. 3.

COLLEAGUE DISTANCE

One who has attended meetings of the Conference in recent years has seen the barriers between colleagues. Responding to what they felt was a domination of the Conference by older members, younger members have fought for representation on all Conference committees and, especially, on the Joint Commissions with the UAHC. On the other hand, at a recent Regional CCAR meeting in Pittsburgh, the middle-aged members of the Conference began to express their feelings of deprivation and asked that they not be overlooked when the time for appointments arrived. Much of this reflects the student revolt and the reaction which has taken place in the general society, but, nonetheless, it indicates that there is a considerable amount of confrontation taking place among the members of the Conference. Dr. Lenn, in his address before the CCAR, indicated that the older men seemed to be more "traditionalist" in their views and stronger in their religious beliefs. Then, with the explosion of a bombshell, Dr. Lenn said: "when we compare contentment in the rabbinical role with religiosity, at least in terms of our breakdown, it appears that the happiest rabbis tend to be those who are on the verge of disappearing."¹⁰ What is most revealing about this statement is not only the realization that the happiest rabbis are departing, and those who remain are not so happy, which in itself is a tragic commentary on the plight of the rabbi today, but, even more important, the statement bears witness to the distance which exists between colleagues.

Any one who has lived in a community where one rabbi would not officiate at mixed marriages while all his colleagues did, and has seen how that rabbi suffered when members of his own congregation were served by rabbis of other congregations, without any concern for rabbinic ethics or *derekh erez*, knows the insensitivity which exists all too often among colleagues. One who has witnessed the breaking of the rules of placement, and the exceptions to rules, and seen the reactions of men in the Conference, realizes the hostile feelings which arise between a rabbi and his colleagues. One who has listened to the differing views of the rabbinic expressed by different colleagues understands that many of the men of the Conference are acting out of world views which are centuries apart.

When almost half of the rabbis agree with the statement, "the CCAR promulgates the values of success and competitiveness among its members to the point that it pits one man against another,"¹¹ more is being said about the feeling that exists between colleagues, than about attitudes toward the CCAR. What the men are saying is:

10. Lenn Address, p. 29.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

I am pitted against my colleague. Either he will get the position or I will. Either his program or mine is better. Either he is a more successful rabbi or I am. We are not brothers joined in common cause, but enemies locked in mortal conflict.

Many of the men of the Conference would like it to be otherwise. Old friends from HUC days and new friends brought together by mutual interests want to work together and deepen their relationship, but, as Janice Rothschild indicates, "the basic, insuperable (and insufferable!) barrier to forming close relationships is not the rabbi's image but his schedule."¹² Michael Sternfield, in a rabbinic thesis which is now in preparation, indicates that more and more rabbis see themselves today as professionals, rather than as the dedicated servant of the congregation. In his interviews, student Rabbi Sternfield finds that, by a count of almost two to one, members of the Conference view themselves as professionals and are thus overcoming the limitations of schedule. This allows more time for their families and friends. Despite limitations of time and space, it would appear that an ever growing number of colleagues are going to begin to close the gaps of distance which have traditionally kept them apart.

SELF DISTANCE

Not many years ago a person could accept the thesis that he played many different roles in life. He was both husband and father, employer and employee, American and Jew. In a society which advocated cultural pluralism it seemed quite proper for the individual to function in many different roles. In those days, there was not as much concern about the fragmentation which has now become so much a part of contemporary life. Today, every man and woman strives to "to get his head together," to know "where he is at," to be a person. No less than others, the rabbi wants to feel a sense of unity, to know where he is and what he's doing. That is why inner conflicts have such an impact upon him, and leave him feeling that part of himself has become quite distant from other parts of himself.

In a "Symposium on the Qualifications of a Rabbi" in the January, 1972, issue of the CCAR Journal, one finds the following views. Leonard Kravitz says: "To me, to be a rabbi, you have to be a 'mensch', . . . how do you measure being a 'mensch'? I don't know, but I do know that being a 'mensch' means being able to relate to people" (p. 5). Joseph Levine says:

I would look for someone who sees his role in the Rabbinate not as a hitching post but as a guide post . . . one to foster radical social change . . . audacious enough to want to liberate the synagogue . . . one who is on the cutting edge of ideological change and who seeks new frontiers of restructuring synagogue and Jewish life (p. 8 f.).

12. Janice Rothschild, "The Rebbetzinhood," *CCAR Journal*, Winter, 1973, p. 26.

Allen Maller sees the rabbi in part as

the managerial entrepreneur of an independent congregation and finds himself engaged in such activities as membership recruitment, fund raising, program planning, public relations, etc. etc. (p. 10).

Nathan Landman sees the rabbinate as

the professional avenue for qualified teachers of Judaism, and devotees of Israel's historic Covenant to promote a life style among Jews which elevates the moral quality of their lives, and which strives to confront Jews with the obligation to see themselves as linked to God, Torah, and Israel (p. 14).

At the ground breaking ceremony for the new Temple Sinai in Atlanta, Richard Lehrman said,

The greatest challenge in life comes from creating something out of nothing. And the greatest satisfaction in life comes from doing it with people that I care about and with people that I love and with people who love Judaism. After all, for a Rabbi, what else is there?¹³

In his Valedictory Sermon, delivered at Temple Israel, St. Louis, on March 8, 1963, the late Ferdinand Isserman said,

My goal has been to be an irritating not a beloved rabbi, to stir people to action, not to lull them to complacency, to disturb them as the prophets did in their generation . . .¹⁴

"Being able to relate to people" is quite a different undertaking from wanting "to liberate the synagogue." And, so, too, being a "managerial entrepreneur" is something quite different from being a "devotee of Israel's historic Covenant." And "doing it with people I care about and with people that I love" does not have the same feeling-tone as being "an irritating Rabbi, to stir people to action, to disturb them as the prophets did." The American Reform Rabbi in 1973 is being torn asunder by the different directions in which he would go. Some of these directions are dictated by forces from without, and some are the result of striving from within. Often the rabbi sees himself and his goals in terms of the needs of his congregants, and at other times his self-image is dictated by his own inner needs. He would like to fulfill Henry David Thoreau's dictum, "He hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away." But sometimes the drummer is God, and sometimes the Torah, and sometimes the exigencies of the hour, and sometimes the president of the congregation, and sometimes his wife, and sometimes his own need for love, or success, or money. The drum is always different, and the places from which the separate beats come are far apart.

13. Richard Lehrman, *Kehillah* (bulletin), March, 1973, p. 2.

14. Ferdinand Isserman, *Temple Israel Bulletin*, March 9, 1973, p. 1.

JEWISH DISTANCE

Were the distance which today's rabbi feels from his institutions and his colleagues, and the painful conflict that each man feels in his own self not enough, there remains yet another aspect to his alienation which is more terrifying than all the rest.

Dr. Lenn reports that 71% of the rabbis

express a feeling of "Jewish distance" between themselves and members of their congregations. Some 50% identify a definite lack of concern for Judaism on the part of their congregants. Almost half, indeed, refer to "Jewish distance" as the single most frustrating obstacle that they are experiencing in their careers as rabbis. Rabbis seem to have little trouble with their congregations in the routine affairs which are involved in running a synagogue. Only 12%, for example, complain of unreasonable demands made on them by their congregations. But when it comes to things Jewish, it's a different matter. Perhaps this can best be summed up by the fact that more than 60% of the fully satisfied rabbis complain of a "Jewish distance" between themselves and their congregations. As one rabbi put it: "... and it grows, as I keep studying." Of the dissatisfied rabbis, a total of 78% pointed to this "Jewish distance" factor as a basic thorn in their lives.¹⁵

Robert Katz, professor at HUC-JIR, accepting this thesis, wonders about the first year which each student is now spending in Jerusalem.

Such intense identification with tradition, with Israel, and with Hebrew literature may increase his sense of ideological distance from members of his congregation, create disaffection with the galut, and add new elements to the sense of malaise.¹⁶

Eugene Lipman, out of a passion which expresses his own deep conviction and the feelings of his colleagues, suggests that the reason why many rabbis are not, by and large, content with their lives and their work is that they

spend much of their professional lives depressed and in near despair because they lead congregations whose members do not need them most of the time, whose classrooms are empty of adults—at the same time that uneducated Reform Jews tell their rabbis how Reform Judaism should be, and make it stick by majority vote.¹⁷

"Jewish distance" between laymen and clergy began in this country, argues Albert Friedlander, with the settlement of the German Jews in the 1850s. The old pattern of life, in which the rabbi was the head of the organized community, did not exist in the United States. Instead, a new style of Jewish spiritual leadership developed. The prototype was the "hazzan-minister," who served a voluntary association that had little use for the rabbi in his traditional role as a judge. "They wanted—and got—a Jewish version of the Protestant minister."¹⁸

15. Lenn Report, p. 137 f.

16. Robert Katz, "Seminary Malaise," *CCAR Journal*, Winter, 1973, p. 10.

17. Eugene Lipman, "No Surprises," *Ibid.*, p. 32 f.

18. Albert Friedlander, *Reform Judaism in America: The Second Stage*, 1973 (New York: UAHC, 1973), p. 5.

In his recently published *The Masks Jews Wear*, Eugene Borowitz pursues this analysis. His line of thought is as follows: American Jewry created a new type of rabbi to meet the needs of Emancipation. Instead of a judge and teacher of Jewish law, he was to be one who would mediate between the old Jewish traditions and American society. He was to get along well with the Gentiles and be "well accepted" in the non-Jewish community.

With this new rabbinic role came an unconscious deal with the laity. As they knew and cared less about Judaism, he would be Jewish for them. More, they would consider it a major part of his rabbinic role to try to win them back to Judaism... Because the rabbi represented most Jews in duties they could not perform for themselves, he received from them a new and high status.

The rabbi, in turn, enhanced his own position by taking upon himself the ethos that had formerly belonged to and obligated the community. In theory, he might not be happy about the qualitative difference in Jewishness that now opened between him and the laity. In practice, his special status was based on it.¹⁹

Despite the benefits accruing from this intricate type of rabbinic congregational relationship, still there are those who are concerned. Joseph Narot tells of a woman with whom he spent a considerable amount of time during the year before her death. No one in the congregation ever did anything for her, but continually members would call and say: "Rabbi, you must do something!"²⁰ It is this underlying assumption that the rabbi has become the surrogate for the congregation that disturbs not only Rabbi Narot and Dr. Borowitz but many of their colleagues as well.

After considerable study and research concerning the attitudes of congregants, Leonard Fein suggests that rabbis are viewed by the majority of their congregants as professional purveyors of expert services and not as potential partners. Therefore, it appears to be the preference of many congregants, Dr. Fein believes, that the rabbi keep his distance. Most rabbis come to know this, and many tailor their demeanor accordingly. The consequence is frustration for rabbis, so many of whom begin their careers with higher hopes for genuine relationships. After a number of conversations with rabbis, Dr. Fein is of the opinion that the frustration felt by many of them comes from the combination of the rabbi being expected to do things he does not especially enjoy doing, his feeling incompetent to do some of the things he believes want doing, and (often) his feeling that he lacks adequate support for doing the things that he both knows how to do and believes should be done.

On June 9, 1962, in his Ordination Address at the College-Institute, Jacob Rudin warned a generation of rabbis to come.

19. Eugene Borowitz, *The Masks Jews Wear*, draft manuscript, p. 242 f.

20. Joseph Narot, quoted in the *Temple Beth Zion Bulletin* of Buffalo, New York, p. 8.

The pain and the struggle are there, because people, mostly, will not deride you, nor mock you, nor call you foolish. The fire that will sear your heart and burn out your conviction will be the vagrant, careless flame of their indifference. They will not militantly deny. They simply will not militantly affirm. You will deal most of the time with what we colloquially call nice people. But they won't care about a near book or a far horizon or an ever-present God. They are nice people with a closed book and a near horizon and a God who isn't present anywhere, particularly."²¹

CLOSING THE GAP

There are several ways in which the distance between a rabbi and his institutions, his colleagues, himself, and his congregants might be overcome. They all require careful analysis and caution in approach. In the description of each of the forms of alienation with which the rabbi is confronted there is already apparent the means to overcome the feeling of isolation. Once a person knows his condition, he has begun to find a way out of his dilemma. This is Dr. Lenn's point when, in conclusion, he states:

To the extent that the rabbinate itself, individually, in small groups, and in convention assembled will examine the data meticulously, to that extent will they unravel their own structure and process. A thorough-going diagnosis may be 90% of the "solution." Honest and knowledgeable confrontation with any problem is the minimum requirement for dealing with it constructively and effectively.²²

One of the best ways men have found to close the gap which exists between them is to join together in common undertaking. This means creating community. Dr. Fein states boldly and affirmatively:

Through all of our work, no single conclusion registers so strongly as our sense that there is, among the people we have come to know, a powerful, perhaps even desperate, longing for community . . . our sense of the matter is that the need for community is so strong, and the prospect of community so weak, that people are reluctant to acknowledge the need, knowing, or believing, that it is not likely to be satisfied.²³

What is even more important than stating the need for community, is finding the way to create it. Dr. Fein and his associates, under the auspices of the Long Range Planning Committee of the UAHC, were able, with the use of group dynamics techniques, to fashion what has now come to be called the Jewish Experiential workshop. Small groups, meeting over a weekend or two, have come to understand themselves better as Jews, more about their synagogues, and, most important, they have been able to begin to create a shared community—not only for themselves, but for their congregations. With but few exceptions, these workshops, in which many rabbis have actively participated, have sparked

21. Jacob Rudin, *Very Truly Yours* (New York: Bloch Pub. Co., 1971), p. 213.

22. Lenn Report, p. 416 f.

23. Leonard Fein, *Reform Is a Verb* (New York: UAHC, 1972), p. 140.

a sense of renewal and commitment among many members of congregations across the country.

What are the implications for the pulpit rabbi? Dr. Borowitz provides the beginning of an answer.

We require rabbis who will stop being Jewish for us and indicate how, together, we can all be Jews... Were the rabbi not to serve some Jews whom he did not represent to the world and to Judaism but only taught, his role would change decisively. Sermons and lectures would no longer be his major activity, as it is so long as he must know more and care more than anyone else. As merely one of a number of inquiring, active Jews, he could fulfill his responsibility by leading a *chevrah*... With a cluster of believing Jews in the synagogue, it would be foolish to claim that Judaism centered on the rabbi and his personality... Such a rabbi could go back to being more of the guide and example his traditional forebear was. Better, in a society of strangers and masqueraders, he could concentrate on being a person of full ethnic and religious depth. One thing is certain: with a few devoted Jews around, he would be a lot less lonely.²⁴

Underlying Dr. Borowitz's basic position is the assumption that a rabbi needs to be both a *mensch*, a real person, and, also, what he has always been: a teacher. In *Basic Judaism*, Milton Steinberg wrote, "Judaism being what it is, what else shall rabbis be in the first instance if not those who know, and knowing, teach?"²⁵ Of course, the central issue is not so much that the rabbi be a teacher, but that he be a certain kind of teacher. Surely, the rabbi will teach, but the critical question is: *how* will he teach? That is the question which is being raised in the schools and colleges of America. And the trend appears clear: most students are carefully evaluating the faculty; most students want the teaching to be relevant, to have meaning for them, to draw them into the learning process; most students want to reach out to their professors and want their professors to reach out to them; most students want smaller groups in which the faculty will come down off the podium and dispense with formality; most students want to contract their courses; and most students want to address their teachers by first name.²⁶ Long ago, Carl Rogers believed that the "real teacher is more interested in how I learn than what I learn."²⁷ Thus, the critical content of a learning experience is the method or process through which the learning occurs.²⁸

If learning is a process, and real teaching is more concerned with the "how" than the "what," and if students desire that the learning experience be more affective, personally meaningful in terms of feel-

24. Borowitz, *Op. cit.*, pp. 244, 246 f.

25. Milton Steinberg, *Basic Judaism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1947), p. 158.

26. Interview with Robert Koch, Professor of Art History at Southern Connecticut College in New Haven, Conn.

27. Rogers' description of the *Real Teacher* is found in Greer and Rubinstein's *Will the Real Teacher Please Stand Up?*, p. 104.

28. Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (New York: A Delta Book, 1969), p. 19.

ings as well as thoughts, then learning in the synagogue cannot lag far behind. The rabbi as teacher will be evaluated, will reach out to his congregants, will come down off the pulpit, will meet in smaller groups, and will be called by his first name. He will be one of a cluster of Jews in search of Torah and in search of God. And in the *havurah*, the congregation, he will be as he has always been — teacher, guide, friend, person, a Jew among Jews.

Only one major stumbling block remains, and that is the conflict with himself, the confusion over roles, and the inability to face change. Sanford Seltzer offers a series of sensible suggestions. First, he recommends that members of the Conference be provided, where needed, with the necessary counselling and therapy to aid them in being able to function more effectively in an anxiety-producing society. Second, wherever feasible, he suggests that colleagues join, as they have done in Boston, for a bi-weekly, two-hour session with a psychiatrist to talk about themselves, each other, and their work. And third, although extremely dangerous and delicate, he urges the utilization of trained personnel, such as psychiatrists or group dynamics specialists, to meet with carefully selected and structured "discussion groups" consisting of rabbis and laymen to talk about the synagogue, the rabbi, and themselves, as people and as Jews.²⁹ Important changes are taking place in the synagogue today. Not the least of these is a new relationship between the rabbi and his people. In such a time, the congregant and the rabbi need all the help they can get. Counselors can assist the rabbi and the congregant to know who they are and where they are going. Then each will be able to feel and say, "I'm OK, you're OK!" and get on with the task.

The Lenn Report indicates that the rabbi is plagued by a feeling of "Jewish distance;" the Fein Report indicates that the congregants want, more than anything else, a shared community. The Lenn Report indicates that rabbis want most to be of help to others; the Fein Report indicates that congregants want a rabbi who will help them and, especially, their youth. The Lenn Report indicates that the rabbis feel an almost overwhelming need for change; the Fein Report, in itself, and in the entire process which was developed, is a mechanism for change. Thus, there is a common need, a common interest, and a common understanding.

In one of the responses to the Lenn survey a congregant responded: "I believe that we are very lucky to have our rabbi and his wife as our religious leaders." There are many congregants who would echo that statement and there are many rabbis who have very good feelings about members of their congregations.

29. Sanford Seltzer, "Some Reflections on Rabbinic-Congregational Relationships," *CCAR Journal*, April, 1972, p. 69 f.

With common interest and common affection there is hope for the troubled American Reform rabbi today. Jacob Rudin's poignant words point the way:

Tradition tells us that when scholars left the bet hamidrash, they parted one from the other with these words: "Mayest thou behold thy world during thy lifetime, but may thine end be in life eternal, and thy hopes, may they endure throughout all generations."

So I take my leave of you with the same words. May you see the fruits of your labors in your lives, but may your lives be bigger than your years, and your aspirations as deathless as our people and our faith. Go forth on your way, with a near book, toward a far horizon. May the ever-present God be with you.³⁰

30. Rudin, *Op. cit.*, p. 214.

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Winds of Liturgical Reform

EDWARD GRAHAM

IN THAT TRULY REMARKABLE ANALYSIS OF THE dislocation of contemporary society, *In Bluebeard's Castle*, George Steiner argues that "the lapse from ceremony and ritual in much of public and private behavior has left a vacuum. At the same time, there is a thirst for magical and 'transrational' forms. The capacity of organized religion to satisfy this thirst diminishes."

Though Steiner's description of the problem is both accurate and acute, his conclusion concerning organized religion's abilities is, I believe, off the mark. It is not the *capacity* to satisfy the worshipper's desire for the sacred that is diminished; it is organized religion's failure of nerve, its lack of *will* to slake that particular thirst, that characterizes our religious practice in general and our newly-ordered liturgical practices in particular. Folk masses, simple vernacular texts, increasing congregational participation in acts formerly hieratic—jazz or rock services, brides and grooms composing their own "creative" wedding services, officiants facing the congregation rather than the altar—all these and countless other such innovations point in one direction. They demonstrate organized religion's willingness to allow, or even to hurry along, its own desacralizing process. Whatever virtues participatory democracy may ultimately be seen to have in political and social contexts, its primary thrust tends to dissipate the magic and transrational forms that Steiner says we thirst for.

Those who guide liturgical reform have lost the will to insist that the clergy has a unique function in worship, and that a liturgy without *sancta* leads to something other than prayer. *Hierarchy*—once a perfectly acceptable or even approbative term—has become a pejorative. But the lack of will or failure of nerve to which I refer does not result simply from the clergy's own changing beliefs concerning either sacredness or their own function—though these, too, may contribute to the atrophy. Mainly, it results from the clergy's all-too-eager desire to be "with it," to adopt the currently fashionable egalitarian posture and, thereby, wholly to misinterpret the modern worshipper's needs.

Perhaps even more destructive of Steiner's "transrational forms" is the simple-minded response of some would-be liturgists to that omnipresent pressure for "relevance." To the extent that that pressure is relieved by a liturgy charged with the topics of this morning's headlines, to that very extent is the transrational possibility of worship subverted. However nobly motivated they may be, liturgical statements detailing

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responses to current and specific social or political problems work at cross purposes with worship, for such statements distract the worshipper from the universal Principle (or Principal) whose essence prayer seeks to impress upon him. In any case, and for good or for ill, the changes implicit in a turning toward egalitarianism and "relevance" in worship are currently being felt: sanctuary windows all over America have been thrown wide open, and the winds of liturgical reform have been creating quite a stir within.

It is surprising to learn, with these reforming winds blowing so vigorously and with such significant consequences among many American religious groups during the sixties and seventies, that Reform Judaism in this country has preserved its liturgy intact in an air-tight container called the Newly Revised *Union Prayer Book* (UPB), copyright 1940. Indeed, though many deletions, alterations, and additions have modulated its prayers since the early days of the movement in this country, none of these changes seem to have been intended to alter the essential ambience of Reform worship since the first UPB appeared in 1894.

Whatever the reasons for the long hiatus, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), circa 1966, began serious work on a new and much desired prayerbook for the American Reform movement. The CCAR Liturgy Committee was faced, at the outset, with the impossible job of creating a new order of service from the chaos of the most disparate ideas concerning God, Torah, Israel, the Holocaust, Judaism in America, and modern social and economic problems. Nor did the divergent nature of these ideas—passionately and eloquently expressed at Liturgy Committee meetings—derive especially from the particular persons who serve on that committee. For the sharp division there accurately reflects the splintering of opinion on fundamental issues among all Reform Jews, clergy and laymen alike. The process by which the Committee tries to translate these disparate ideas into a liturgy appropriate for today's Reform Jew is fascinating, yet the seemingly pragmatic rationale that lies behind the prayerbook—But more of that later.

On the face of it, of course, the problem is easily understood: Reform rabbis and laymen have been pressing the CCAR for a new prayerbook, and the flood of experimental services sent to the Liturgy Committee from congregations all over the country testifies to the mounting dissatisfaction with the Newly Revised UPB in use in most American Reform congregations since its copyright in 1940.

As far as I can ascertain, the most telling reasons for dissatisfaction with the Newly Revised are three:

- 1) The English is frequently archaic or obscure;
- 2) The theology (though not consistent throughout) tends to depict a mankind that is overly dependent upon an omnipotent God;
- 3) The prayers do not take sufficient cognizance of those problems that

many American Jews see as central to their lives, e.g., international and racial strife, economic exploitation, personal fulfillment, etc.

Important as the first two reasons for dissatisfaction are, they are less crucial than the third, for this one bears on the very nature of *worship* and *prayer* as most American Jews have long understood the practices described by those terms. There is surely nothing unusual in Jews wanting to pray for help in overcoming their own or society's shortcomings. But when—as in some of the experimental liturgies now being circulated—psychologically oriented prescriptions for personal fulfillment pass for prayers, something other than worship is taking place. And when partisan social and political statements quite obviously addressed to congregants, rather than to God, masquerade as worship, prayer has yielded place to particularist poppycock.

Here, for example, is a responsive reading sent along for the Liturgy Committee's consideration from "A Creative Yom Kippur Service," a reading that forms part of a section confessing guilt "for the sins of war":

Reader: As the fighting continues in Indo-China, thousands of men have been killed as a result of conflicting economic and political systems.

Congregation: Where is peace in the Far East?

On the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, warring nations fight for control of a tiny parcel of ancient land.

Where is peace in the Middle East?

Great powers arm to the teeth, rattle sabers, arm small nations, foment revolutions, suppress revolutions, clash on their borders.

Where is peace among the nations?

Three times in a decade, young leaders have been assassinated, and no gun control laws have been passed.

Where is peace in our cities?

In this nation, young people and police clash in bloody battle as more National guardsmen are called in to an already over-sensitized area.

Where is peace on our campuses?

In our own city there is prejudice, corruption, crime and murder abundant.

Where is peace in [the city where the service was conducted]?

Or another responsive reading—sent along for possible inclusion in the new UPB—this one following the *Sh'ma* in a "creative" Friday evening service:

Reader: Why do we come together?

Congregation: To look into ourselves and find the meaning of our lives, through ourselves, through each other.

Meaning is not enough; there must be motivation, substance and goal.

Our goal is goodness. Honesty of thought, our substance. And motivation, is our obligation to achieve both.

Our relation to God is not a private, cut-off experience, occurring only in this room, at this time.

Through each other we bring our lives to this place and we look deeply into ourselves and at our ways.

You sit in comfortable seats. Are your minds comfortable?

We are looking deeply into ourselves and judging right from wrong.

There is only one path to forgiveness; to peace of mind.

We know the days of cleansing prayer are past. We must find absolution within ourselves.

Know what you are, accept what you are. Change what needs changing.

We can judge ourselves and recognize right from wrong. Oh! those terrible hours in the middle of the night when we must face ourselves.

Now, I know very well (*pace* Rabbi Heschel *et al*) that God doesn't need our prayers, and I am not at all unmindful of the benefits that prayer can, and should, confer upon the psyche and social conscience of the worshipper. And before I am tried and convicted for the anachronistic crime of pietism, let me hasten to point out that though *prayer* is a term descriptive of an infinity of forms, it does have at least one indispensable characteristic common to any and all those forms: it must be directed or addressed to someone or something other than the worshippers themselves. As the unabridged *Random House Dictionary* puts it, *prayer* is a "devout petition to, or any form of spiritual communion with, God or an object of worship."

Here some of my rabbinic friends will insist that the Jewish notion of worship is shaped by one of the Hebrew words for prayer (*mitpalel*), a reflexive form suggesting the inward direction that prayer takes. Indeed, as one rabbi explained in my hearing as he invited his congregation to pray silently: "We are about to enter a period of creative self-analysis — which is what prayer really is." Such latter-day interpretations of the reflexive usage leave untranslated or untranslatable such an expression as "to pray for Heaven's (or God's) mercy." Or does one pray to oneself for God's mercy?

But whatever one of the Hebrew words for *prayer* may suggest to some, (and Alcalay's *Complete English-Hebrew Dictionary* lists four other non-reflexive Hebrew synonyms along with *mitpalel*) anyone acquainted with the siddur or mahzor knows that (dare I say) all Jewish prayer — silent, sung, or recited — has, in fact, been addressed to God. Perhaps the only significant exceptions in Jewish prayerbooks have been those Biblical, Talmudic, or other traditional texts included for purposes of study or admonition. In the introductory notes to his classic study of the subject, *Jewish Liturgy*, A.Z. Idelsohn writes that "the Jewish prayerbook has two basic elements: *laudation* and *petition*. On the one hand, the Jew praises the Creator of the world, and on the other he prays unto Him for his personal needs as well as for the needs of his people." Idelsohn goes on to point out that Jewish worship has additional sub-divisions of meditation and reflection, but even these sub-sections, upon examination, find the Jewish worshipper calling upon God for help in one way or another. Put simply: it has been the practice of Jews to pray to God.

No doubt the act of praying — be the prayers laudatory, petitionary, or meditative — was, and is, calculated to have an *effect* on the worshipper involved in that act, but that is a quite different thing from suggesting that prayer is, or ought consciously to be, directed inward. There is, after all, a rather thinly-disguised idolatry implicit in such a procedure.

And the idol is none other than the worshipper himself who — according to some masters of the new humanist or naturalist dispensation — is probably the only one listening to prayer in any case. To be sure, the spectrum of Jewish belief concerning the nature or identity of God has been very wide, but when the worshipper himself becomes the addressee of his own prayer, something other than praying is taking place. It may even be that that “something other” is something good, but it is simply not prayer.

The whole issue was clarified for me at a recent CCAR Liturgy Committee meeting to which the Rabbinical Assembly’s liturgist, Rabbi Jules Harlow, was invited. Our guest spoke about some of the problems common to Reform and Conservative prayerbook writers, and concluded that our essential, shared difficulty lay in the fact that “we are trying to create prayerbooks for people who don’t pray.” And, one may add, that because many contemporary Jews don’t, can’t or won’t pray, some of our experimental “liturgies” are being created to help such Jews to do the something else that they may seem to prefer. What we may see coming into being, then, is a body of putative prayer in search of a Listener — if not of a subject!

And so, we find in the American Reform movement — after a postwar orgy of growth and building that has surfeited a collective edifice complex — a national membership of over a million generally well-educated, well-fed Jews who are staying away in droves from the regular worship taking place in over 700 of those edifices. Why? Contemporary Reform Jews don’t want to pray. And none of the gimmickry of “relevant” prayers, rock services, or rabbis-in-residence will help — over any extended period — to overcome that unwillingness. The reasons for this disinclination toward prayer are many — some contemporary, some as old as human history, and all far too complex for discussion here. But by now it should have become apparent to clergy and lay leadership alike that attempts to capitalize on the American Jewish community’s well-documented interest in politics, the arts, race relations, the sexual revolution, woman’s lib, etc., etc. as a *substitute for prayer* are naive, pathetic, and doomed finally to fail.

They must fail because such attempts ignore a vital principle of Jewish life that our forebears understood very well: *l’havdil beyn kodesh l’hol* — to distinguish between the sacred and the ordinary. That which we try to incorporate in our worship from downtown Burbank, from the market place, or from the political arena is a vain thing. But so sold are we on the perfectly legitimate idea that religion and prayer must have consequences in our everyday lives, that we mistakenly try to turn our worship into one more extension of our ordinary existence — no longer distinguishing between the sacred and the ordinary.

No, I’m not suggesting for a moment that politics, business, and the rest are outside the contemporary synagogue’s ken. The very same walls

that house our worship can quite properly house our meetings, our artistic endeavors, and our study — all of which may, or even must, translate themselves into subsequent extramural actions. But as Thomas Aquinas long ago insisted: “Action should be something added to the life of prayer, not something taken away from it.” And though the source and substance of that statement seems to bespeak the pieties of a bygone age, it would be the ultimate pragmatism for us to heed its wisdom today. For something there is in man that loves and yearns for the sacred, the transcendent.

Herein, then, lies the great error of so many contemporary efforts at liturgical reform: we do little or nothing to institute or to recover in our worship that sense of the holy and mysterious so desperately needed and sought after in our own time. How else to explain why so many of our Jewish young people (and some not so young) are into Hare Krishna, astrology, Zen Buddhism, and mind-expanding drugs? That they and we yearn (though perhaps not consciously) for some transcendent vision seems self-evident. Yet, if some seeker after the supernal light should find himself now at a not untypical Reform service, his questing mind and spirit might well be dulled by antiseptic “prayers” addressed to a principle called “a power for good in the universe,” by music hardly distinguishable from that used to huckster a soft drink promising “the Real Thing,” and by an amateurish attempt to put the morning’s headlines into a “religious perspective.” Hardly the formula to yield a sense of awe and holiness. Why won’t we religionists do our thing? That’s the mystery!

Well, there is no mystery, of course. The CCAR Liturgy Committee is trying honestly to respond to the pleas of fellow-rabbis and of many Reform congregations for a new, (and here’s that word again) *relevant* prayerbook. Mercifully, only a few of the non-prayers to which I’ve been objecting will find a place in the new volume. But in its honest attempt to satisfy the frequently conflicting desires of all those anxious for a new prayerbook, the Committee is planning — *in some few of its services* — to obscure what sanctity and awe remains in the text with barely-concealed and (in my judgment) vapid, personal, political, and social admonitions addressed, essentially, to those “praying.” It is quite true that many of the loudest voices crying for a new prayerbook want to have such “relevant and meaningful” prayers in the new volume, but these are the voices of those who have lost sight of that crucial injunction to distinguish between the sacred and the ordinary. Most discouraging — during the perhaps fifty meetings of the Committee that I have attended — has been the total absence of any discussion or conscious attempt to charge the new liturgy with a sense, or at least the possibility, of the sacred or mysterious.

Those who insist that the modern Reform Jew simply can no longer give his intellectual assent to any of the traditional ideas of God and

prayer may well be correct. Many of today's Reform Jews conceive of the Torah as a moral-bearing myth. The more reason, then, to clothe that "myth" in garments of holiness. In his extraordinary book, *Homo Ludens*, the Dutch thinker, Johan Huizinga, argues that "myth, after having lost its value as an adequate token of man's understanding of the cosmos, still retains the function of expressing the divine in poetical language, which is rather more than an aesthetic function, in fact, a liturgical one." In short, intellectual assent is not the *sine qua non* of an effective liturgy. Prayer must be something more than a cerebral effort, a series of pronouncements about God and the universe to which the worshipper subscribes. Rather, religious services should be conceived as a means to help the worshipper out of himself to the extraordinary vision for which he yearns. However infrequently such epiphanies may occur, they are, and must remain, the primary goal of prayer. Mystic rubbish?

Let us consider as an alternative the unspoken and seemingly pragmatic rationale that currently lies behind the forthcoming Reform prayerbook—the rationale I mentioned earlier. It goes something like this: Reform Jews need a new liturgy that will be identifiably Jewish while responding to the needs of a constituency whose majority rarely participates in worship, is vaguely agnostic, but is very much interested and involved in contemporary socio-political movements and the arts. Given these premises, new prayers must emphasize the necessity and nobility of human effort to improve the world. So far as He is invoked at all, God should be mentioned mainly as the ethical source of these high aspirations. His role as a doer of acts should be limited to those of a sort of celestial mechanic in charge of the shrinking number of extra-terrestrial and sublunary phenomena we still do not quite understand.

Such a liturgy as this will probably satisfy (or at least fail to offend) the theists, and it will probably silence the objections of the agnostics, humanists, and naturalists who seem to insist that man is, himself, the only one responsible for the world and its doings. Perhaps, best of all, it will have the virtue of bringing liturgical utterances into line with the vaguely benevolent and peace-seeking ethos that has always moved men of good will but seems especially "in" in most of the American Jewish community just now.

AND—I submit—just such a seeming pragmatism will have no lasting effect on the pattern of worship or attendance in those same 700 nearly-empty edifices because the rationale fudges one of its own major terms by misinterpreting "the needs of . . . [the] constituency," and because the Liturgy Committee's actual work on the prayerbook fails to respond as fully as it might or ought to that constituency's interest and potentially affirmative response to "the arts." What the Reform constitu-

ency surely does *not* need is a liturgy so constructed as to receive its majority's intellectual assent. Even if it were possible to produce such a compromise document (and I'm not sure that it is possible), the citizenry in the pews today can do nicely without a weekly theological, social, and political referendum. What is desperately needed in Reform worship is some passion, mystery, fire, excitement, awe—all those characteristics of which it has been progressively denuded by continuing efforts to make the prayers rationally acceptable. Of course, I do not say that prayers should be so stated as to be grossly and deliberately *unacceptable* to the worshipper's reason, or that agnostics, humanists, and naturalists ought to be read out of the movement. I do insist, however, that extended ratiocination, the expression of doubts about the very existence of God, and trumpeted anthropocentric conceptions of the world have rarely served as the ideal *Urstoff* of worship. That these things ultimately may have led to profound insights regarding man's relationship with the divine is no recommendation for their institution as prayer.

For if heartfelt worship is wanted, a Keatsian "negative capability"—a cessation of "irritable reaching after fact and reason"—may be required. Perhaps a Coleridgean "willing suspension of disbelief" is called for. God knows (if I may be permitted the reference) that far greater sacrifices of conscience have been made for far less worthy ends!

Which brings us to the CCAR Liturgy Committee's failure, thus far, to take sufficient account of "the arts." Let's be overt chauvinists about it and say out loud that no group of its size has contributed more (in talent and support), or has been more responsive to the arts than the Jews. We have carried on a long and passionate love affair with the Muses, and contemporary Reform Jews are especially eager to continue the *liaison*. So far as the new liturgy is concerned, the artistic *amour* will be frustrated in part. As matters now stand, the forthcoming prayerbook is to be enriched by representational art and the bookmaker's craft, but—alas—apart from some lovely poems from various sources that will serve as additional "readings," the truly indispensable talents of the creative literary artist shall be in short supply in the liturgy itself. Again, of course, such a shortage works against the possibility that worshippers will be truly *moved* by their prayers. This despite numerous Liturgy Committee discussions on the subject of appropriate *littérateurs* who might be commissioned to write new prayers in Hebrew or English, or newly to translate old ones especially for this volume.

In a formal statement of March 15, 1971, titled "An Approach to the Revision of the Reform Prayer Book—1971," Rabbi Joseph B. Glaser, Executive Vice-President of the CCAR and a sometime ex-officio member of the Liturgy Committee wrote as follows:

Prayer must be poetry. The poet puts within his reach something the reader doesn't even know he was reaching for until he reads it. Thus, it

exalts and expands, also the primary function of prayer. It follows that rabbis, per se, should not be writing prayers, as has been the approach of the CCAR up to now. A non-poet must inevitably write prose. Prosaic prayers are an impossibility. They are but readings, however insightful and profound they may be. But they do not serve a liturgical function.

And further on:

We . . . are possibly talking about what could be a valuable contribution to literature in general and a book of literary treasure that could be a delight and a comfort to many beyond the Reform Movement. This calls for the finest talent available. . . .

Now, I yield to no one in my admiration for the editor of the forthcoming prayerbook—Rabbi Chaim Stern. He is a gifted, knowledgeable, experienced man who has co-edited the enthusiastically received new prayerbook of the English Liberal movement: *Service of the Heart*. He has actually written the major part of the new prayerbook, but I doubt that he sees himself as a poet or as representative of the finest creative literary talent available.

Radix enim omnium malorum est cupiditas! The desire for money is seen once again to be the root of all evil. It would, no doubt, cost a great deal of money—as well as a great deal of time and trouble—to engage the finest literary talent for the task at hand. But, as the CCAR's Executive Vice-President makes clear in another part of his previously quoted statement, the success of this new prayerbook—financial as well as devotional—is tied to its acceptance as an artistic achievement as well as to its liturgical utility. Indeed, the two are inseparable.

All is not so bleak, however. Rabbi Stern and others have written some beautiful and moving texts. Literary and representational works may yet be commissioned for the new prayerbook, and some of the brightest liturgical jewels of the past will shine brightly again in the volume. Of great promise, also, is a planned series of seminars for rabbis and cantors, as well as composers and other persons in the arts, to do some hard thinking and planning for the transmutation of this new liturgy into worship as it will actually take place in the sanctuaries of some 700 congregations. The CCAR Liturgy Committee is hopeful that a stimulating new schema for what might be called “the dynamics of worship” will emerge from these sessions.

As it stands in January of 1973, perhaps eighteen months from publication, the new weekday, Sabbath, and Festival prayerbook for the Reform movement breathes the spirit of Jewish tradition and is in the main (my carping criticism notwithstanding) a straightforward, representative statement of the aspiration of the many dedicated people who are bringing it to fruition, and of a million congregants who will read and sing its prayers.

Let us pray— to Some One Else, if you please—that all this labor may be for a blessing!

Long-hand With Buber

W. GUNTHER PLAUT

The Book

LET ME SAY IT RIGHT AT THE OUTSET: THE FIRST of three planned volumes of letters written by, and to, Martin Buber is the most exciting book I have read in years.¹ I finished its 600 pages at two sittings, and only unavoidable duty prevented me from reading it all at one time. It is literature, history, criticism, Zionism, Germanism, Hasidism; scores of the famous and the near-famous speak in its pages or are addressed by Buber; war and peace, the hopes and tragedies of the Jewish people appear in the ever-changing kaleidoscope of its letters.

The book is, above all, the superb, unself-conscious auto-biography of a man who set out to teach Jews and ended up teaching Gentiles more than his own people. You may know little or much about this man; you may belong to the *cognoscenti* who savour the intricacies of *Daniel* and the origins of the Scholem-Buber controversy over the true nature of Hasidic lore; or to you the man may be a mystery, the lover of the Written Torah who rejected the Oral Law. No matter; this exchange of letters will be fascinating to initiate and non-initiate alike. Add to this the finest available short biography and evaluation of Buber that has been written to date (140 pages, by Grete Schaeder who edited the volume); and, further, a corpus of notes, indices and biographies of Buber's letter partners, and you have the kind of book which comes along only once in a while. For its true subject is history itself, mirrored in the minds of some of the age's most perceptive men and women. The era covered in this first volume is 1897-1918 and it focuses, above all, on the rise of Zionism and the first act of a bitter tragedy: the dissolution of the German-Jewish symbiosis. But there are many other images which appear and re-appear, depending partly on whether Buber kept copies of his own correspondence or whether his correspondents made his letters to them available.

Family

Buber's family surfaces rarely in these letters, except, of course, for his wife, Paula, who, by all odds, was a remarkable woman, an inde-

1. Martin Buber, *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, ed. by Grete Schaeder, vol. I (1897-1918), (Heidelberg: Verlag Lambert Schneider, 1972). The excerpts which appear in this article have been translated by Rabbi Plaut.

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pendent creative spirit whom Buber met at the University of Zurich in 1899 (he was 21 at the time and she a year older).

In those days (writes Schaefer) a woman student was still a rarity. In addition to her birthright of great intellectual endowment she possessed apparently a strong urge for personal independence. From Theodore Lessing's auto-biography we knew that even before becoming a student Paula Winkler lived away from her parents' home, in an artists' colony in Southern Tyrol, a "wild elf-like creature" he calls her, "persistent, brilliant, daring;" another time he calls his pupil (who studied Latin with him) "fabulously bright and of dominant will." (p. 34)

Occasionally, Buber's grandmother, Adele, whom he loved deeply, and his grandfather, Solomon, the famous *ba'al ha-midrash*, make their appearance in this volume.

Whenever I get together with Zionists I am asked how Grandpa is, how he is getting on, how his work is progressing, etc. Never am I introduced to anyone who does not ask me if I am related to Solomon Buber. Recently I was in Breslau and gave a talk before the Zionists there at a celebration of the Maccabees with more than 600 people in attendance. The Rabbi (Dr. Ferdinand Rosenthal) came to congratulate me warmly, told me that he agreed with my opinions and asked me to give regards to Grandpa. Wherever I talk I hear Grandpa's name. From this you can see how deeply the Zionists feel about Jewish literature and how enthusiastic they are about men who, through their work, exalt the crown of Judaism and who, with their whole life, witness to the unbroken vitality of our people. (Letter #7)

Buber's father, a successful business man, had neither Solomon's scholarship nor understanding for Martin's developing interest in Hasidism.

I would be happier if you would forego your interest in the Hasidic movement and the Zohar. These can only corrode the soul and have dreadful effects. Too bad that you waste your talents on such fruitless matters and use up so much work and time for things that the world cannot utilize. (Letter #124)

But, some years later, after Buber had published his *Daniel*, the father accorded his son reluctant admiration.

We have read the magazine with great interest, and if people will say about your work only a portion of what Landauer writes, you can be rather satisfied. We ourselves are filled with joy and happiness that your endeavours have had such success. I am afraid only that such great intellectual work will be too much for you, and I would be happy if you would occupy yourself with less complex problems and return to some easier work. (Letter #215)

The Jewish People. Zionism

Though born to an East European tradition, Buber had become a Westerner in Germany where he had studied and would continue to live until the Nazis forced him to leave. He must have thought of his own background when he saw a trainload of emigrants pass through Berlin. He wrote to his wife:

Yesterday at the railway station I saw a special train with a sign: "Russian Emigrants." The people looked out of the window—they were all Jews. One asked me: "What kind of town is this?" None of them knew where he was, all they knew was that they were going *gen America*. How lost they were! They were alone, without guidance. In Hamburg an agent expects them. What it is they will be doing "there" they did not know. They are like things thrown into an empty room. The officials treat them like animals. . . . One of the emigrants asked us "You are laboring here?" He could not imagine that one can go to a strange land except to engage there in some form of heavy labor in order to make a meager living. (Letter #11)

To Buber, America could never be the answer to the Jewish question. He was a spiritual Zionist by religious tradition, a cultural Zionist by inclination, and a political Zionist by dint of circumstance. The leaders of the movement were quick to recognize the unusual literary capabilities of the young man, and Theodore Herzl asked the twenty-two year old to take on the editorship of *Die Welt*, the chief organ of World Zionism. Buber answered the great man with respect but not without independence.

Your invitation gave me great pleasure, coming as it did as proof of your confidence and holding out the possibility of splendid work. If, nonetheless, I tie my acceptance to conditions, you will understand that this is not based on personal motives. I do have a single desire, namely, that the comparative independence which existed at the time of Feiwel's editorship will continue to be safeguarded. I also must ask for an increase in the honorarium paid to writers who assist in the various issues. I have the intention of staying with average fees, but I must have the right to go beyond them if necessary. (Letter #18)

Herzl's trust was not misplaced.

Esteemed and dear friend! *Die Welt* is splendid. I read the last and the current numbers with deep satisfaction and pride. I know that though I am tired out, there are new people to take my place. (Letter #24)

At the Zionist Congress, Buber had joined Chaim Weizmann's Democratic Faction, which earned him Herzl's bitter critique. The young man defended himself vigorously and he labelled the accusation that Herzl leveled against him "uncalled for and even offensive."

Nothing is further from our minds than a sense of regret; in fact, we are ready now and always to reaffirm what we have said and done. I am surprised that in your debates you utilized basically impermissible means which cast doubt on your opponents' rational sense. (Letter #62)

A year later, the Founder was dead. Buber wrote to his wife:

You have doubtless heard of Herzl's death; tomorrow is the funeral. It came dreadfully unexpected and I cannot grasp it. For him, of course, it was the best time to die: at the height of his achievement and prior to the unavoidable disappointment and defeat. I cannot imagine what form our movement will now take on, but I can hardly think of that, for the human aspect itself moves me too deeply. (Letter #81)

The demise of the leader left the movement bereft of its driving

force and divided against itself. Weizmann, too, was greatly disheartened:

Now, dear Martin, as far as political intentions are concerned I have become very pessimistic of late. During the summer I was in Vienna for the meeting of the Actions Committee and left it with such disgust that until today I have not been able to overcome it. After Herzl's death these people have become even worse. With whom can we work? Have you got people available? If you can name them, fine; I myself do not know any. (Letter #83)

Buber continued to participate in Zionist politics for a while, but he was not cut out for it. He was too introspective, too much the thinker and scholar to fit the role of doer and mover who would jockey for position and would have to disregard the sensitivities of others if that were the only way to success. There was also within him a highly self-critical, almost Hamletian streak which made him, on occasion, indecisive. He planned to settle in Palestine but delayed even a visit to the land. Then the First War broke out and, along with his associates, Buber was caught up in its complexities. He was 35 years old then; he volunteered for the army but was rejected because of his health. To Hans Kohn he wrote:

Never have I felt the meaning of [German] "peoplehood" as much as during these weeks. Jews, too, experience this deep and serious sentiment almost to a man. (Letter #250)

A few months later, Hugo Bergmann [now Shmuel Bergman, philosopher at Hebrew University] wrote to him from Vienna in a similar vein:

Now that we have battled for German culture, we sense more than ever what this culture means to us and how we are tied to its spirit. (Letter #263)

Before long, however, Buber began to develop serious doubts about the war and all supra-patriotic sentimentalities. He knew the difference between truth and propaganda:

There is nobody today who can dare to say, "The truth about the war is thus and so, and nothing else." Presently we do not even have the most elementary preconditions which would enable us to determine the most "objective" fact. Until we have them, all accusations are empty talk. (Letter #264)

More and more, Jewish fate after the war became Buber's chief concern. He founded a new magazine, *Der Jude*, which was published until the mid-twenties and in its short life earned for itself the reputation of being the world's outstanding forum of Jewish letters. Part of it was devoted to contemplating the tension between Germanism (*Deutschtum*) and Judaism which he, himself, considered "a dynamic and tragic problem, an agony of the soul, which, however, can become creative like every agony." Religious non-Jews, too, felt the pull of contrary forces, but for them it was Germanism and Universalism or, as in the case of Hermann Hesse, Messianism:

As far as I am concerned (he wrote to Buber) I have it easier: the *conscious* acknowledgment of peoplehood is strange to me. Since I react with the pulse of the Gospels I see here the presence of a Messianic mankind which even now exists in the seed, that is, in all the individual believers to whom God is more important than any nation. But I have neither the gift nor the practice to express such thoughts, with which I live as a stranger in my daily existence. But in your writing, even where perhaps you meant it differently, I found here and there some endorsement of my thoughts. (Letter #334)

To some Jews, conversion seemed one way to resolve the tension. A well-known judge had written that he knew of nothing which should keep him from accepting Jesus as the Messiah who had redeemed Israel from idolatry. Buber replied:

The world is unredeemed—do you not sense this in every drop of blood as I do? Do you not sense as I do that “Messianic” is not a past event, is nothing in a certain spot of the historical past where it can be localized, but only that to which we look in infinity and for which we wait in eternity? A supra-empirical ideal, something towards which we work every hour, directly confronting us, yet untouchable like God Himself and indubitably alive like Him—in other words, the absolute future? Is it possible that this primeval Jewish sense which is the root of Jewish religiosity, the belief in the fulfilment at the end of days which eschews the ephemeral but yet may, and must, work through the ephemeral, has been torn from your heart? I said that the chasm in this regard is unbridgeable. I mean to say: from me to you there is no bridge at this point. But from you to me, is there one? Would you not ask your own heart? (Letter #372)

But renegades, potential and otherwise, were not the only ones who tested Buber’s mettle. For years he carried on a spirited exchange of letters with Stefan Zweig, whose universalism pitted him against Buber’s Zionism. Zweig had been asked to contribute to *Der Jude* but felt that he could not commit himself:

However, the goodwill is there and I hope you will believe me. Never have I felt as free—and precisely because of my Judaism—as I feel now, in this time of national delusion. I am separated from you and what you stand for only because I have never desired that Judaism would become a nation once more and thereby debase itself in the competitiveness of reality. I love the Diaspora, and I say yes to its essence of idealism, its world-embracing all-human call.

. . . My tragedy *Jeremiah* will take a long time finishing. What its fate will be is no longer important to me; I only know that the two years of labor (bitterly wrought from the duties of the military) have purified and saved me. If I survive the war, nothing more can happen to me. I have put behind me all literary ambition and know that I will utilize my power, whatever worth it may have, only on reality itself. I respect you as an old confidant of my beginnings and I feel for you the same moral respect as ever. Whenever you will call me to do something and I feel free to do it, I will follow you. (Letter #333)

Zweig considered himself—precisely because he was a Jew—as a guest everywhere, an intellectual and spiritual mediator. As a classic liberal he embraced his Diaspora as a blessing:

This supra-national feeling of freedom from the crazy delusion of a fanatic world has saved my soul during this time and I am grateful that it has been Judaism which has made this supra-national freedom available. I actually consider the idea that Judaism should concretize itself [as a nation] a come-down and a rejection of its highest mission.

Perhaps it is its purpose to show throughout the centuries that a community can exist without soil, by common blood and spirit alone, by word and by faith. To forego this singularity would mean for me to resign voluntarily from the high office which we have accepted from history and to close a book which is written on a thousand pages and has yet room for more thousands of years of wandering. . . .

Even though I personally have no faith in the concretization of a community of [Jewish] people who want to rebuild an old nation into a new one, I am still not without respect for those who will create it or devote themselves to the attempt. (Letter #362)

When the issuance of the Balfour Declaration (at the end of 1917) foreshadowed the realization of Zionist dreams, Zweig was more than ever convinced that this represented a regression in Jewish history:

I am entirely clear about my decision to love the painful idea of Diaspora the more the dream [of Jewish nationalism] appears to come closer to realization—that dangerous dream of a Jewish state with canons, flags and decorations. For I love Jewish destiny more than Jewish comfort. This people never did find comfort and fulfillment to be of value, it found its strength only under pressure in the dispersal of its togetherness. When it will gather in one place it will burst asunder from within. What is a nation except destiny transposed, and what remains of it if it escapes its destiny? Palestine would be the terminal point, the return of the circle to itself, the end of a movement which has deeply touched Europe and the whole world. It would be a tragic disappointment like every repetition. (Letter #384)

Buber replied in words to which his own life would later bear witness:

Only this today: that I know nothing of a “Jewish state with canons, flags and decorations,”—not even in the form of a dream. What will be depends on those who will create it, and precisely because of this those must come to help who, like myself, have a human and humane orientation. (Letter #385)

The future founder of *Ihud* speaks here, the passionate lover of Zion who does not want to see his ideals spoiled by the crass politicians and “pragmatists.” He wrote to Bergmann early in 1918:

A few days ago I had a talk with Dr. (Viktor) Jacobson about what is to take place in Palestine. At its conclusion I was near to melancholy. “As quickly as possible and with every means we must create a majority in the land”—the argument made my heart stand still. What can one answer on that same level? We must not deceive ourselves that most of the leading (and probably also most of the led) Zionists are today entirely unscrupulous nationalists (following European models), imperialists indeed, subconscious mercantilists and admirers of success. They talk of “rebirth” and mean “enterprise.” If we are not successful in creating an authoritative counter-balance to them, the soul of the whole movement will be spoiled, perhaps forever. In any case, I am determined to do my utmost until the very end, even if all my personal plans will have to suffer because of it. (Letter #386)

On the same day he addressed to Franz Oppenheimer a letter which outlined his intention to tackle the problem on an intellectual plane:

I plan a collection of essays against the advance of imperialism, mercantilism, and other spiritual negotiations in Palestine. The collection is not to be primarily polemical in character but, of course, it should point out the threatening danger and give a picture of the community as we understand and want it. (Letter #387)

Buber was not alone in his doubts. Arnold Zweig, who, unlike his namesake, was a staunch Zionist and socialist (he was to make *aliyah* in 1933, return after the war and live in East Germany) wrote:

The real Zionist struggle will begin only after the War. The sense of *golus* will also emigrate to Palestine and we have to be very careful to uncover all its masks, and especially so the mask of Orthodoxy which will be inimical to culture and fight as un-Jewish everything we want to take with us of the great European cultural values. I see a whole knot of problems, but in my good hours I also see, with equal clarity, the spiritual solutions. (Letter #379)

As the war was nearing its end, Buber made his final decision to retreat from political Zionism into scholarship. Was it his growing disillusionment or his basic nature which forbade his active involvement? Perhaps both.

As far as I am personally concerned, I want at last to take a look at the land, and do it as soon as possible after the war. But probably a number of years will still go by before I can think of settling there. For to start with, I can no longer begin by working the soil and I do not as yet see for myself any possibility of economic independence. Secondly, and that is the most important thing, there is a reminder by my doctor, who has given me to understand that for the next few years I must give myself entirely to the final formulation of my thought system which of late has matured, and that I must create the possibility of concentration and do so with some care, which means, amongst other things, that I should keep myself back from all public activities . . .

. . . I have (at a recent public address) experienced the sense of *limitation*: I can no longer talk "to Jews," in fact, no longer "to . . ." *Incipit vita nova*. (Letter #400, the last in vol. I)

The Editor

Throughout these early years, after his formal studies had come to an end, Buber had been engaged in literary enterprises. He was forever planning collections and magazines, and in his official capacity as an editor for a leading German publishing house he was in touch with writers and scholars of many persuasions. Life-long associations were formed on more than one occasion after Buber had issued an invitation to submit an article or essay to some collection or to *Der Jude*. In this way he came to know both Rosenzweig and Kafka. To the former he wrote, at the end of 1915:

Honoured Sir: Beginning next January, together with some friends, I will be editing a monthly magazine called *Der Jude*, which will not be

subject to any party philosophy and is meant to treat of Jewish problems in depth and to provide an adequate exposition of Jewish reality as well as an unswerving and insistent emphasis on Hebrew. I have agreed to edit the magazine during the war and during the period immediately afterwards, and I would be happy to count you amongst our co-workers. I would like to publish meaningful and relatively brief essays in addition to short comments on the happenings of the day. I would be very grateful for an early answer and any terms you would suggest. (Letter #280)

Kafka, long before even the *cognoscenti* had discovered him, was singled out by Buber as someone whom he wanted to publish. At about the time when the United States was joining the Allied war effort, Kafka wrote from Prague:

Many thanks for your kind letter. Well, I will be published in *Der Jude* after all, even though I have always thought it impossible. Please do not call my pieces "parables," for they are not really parables. If they are to have a joint title, then perhaps one should call them "Two Animal Stories." (Letter #359. The stories appeared under this title in vol. II of *Der Jude*, pp. 488 and 559 ff.)

Editing frequently involved Buber in the unpleasant task of refusing contributions. He could be very harsh at times, as he was with young Werner Kraft who was desperately searching for Jewish meaning but found himself repelled by the Jewish people. Buber was not satisfied merely to reject the article which Kraft had submitted:

I do not suppose you will understand what I have said of Jewish matters, for you yourself say that it is "the Jews who prevent you from appreciating Judaism." Apparently you have not occupied yourself at all with the latter. As for me, Jews prevent me as little from an approach to Judaism, as human beings . . . prevent me from being human.

To say it in your own language: "I do not have the courage to publish your writing in my journal;" or, to speak in my own tongue: "I do not believe that what you have to say matters at all." (Letter #345)

Kraft was deeply hurt but persisted in his search, and, in time, became Buber's admirer and disciple. In 1933, he settled in Palestine and, in 1966, published a noteworthy volume of Buberiana in which he reported on years of conversations with the master.

But when Buber admired someone he admired deeply, and when he loved he loved passionately. Is there a more perceptive evaluation anywhere of Shmuel Josef Agnon than what Buber wrote about the man who, a half century later, would receive the Nobel Prize in literature:

You would like to hear from me a word about our friend Agnon. Not many words, just one! Here it is: Agnon has a sacred relationship to Jewish existence. There are others, who like him know about it, but their knowledge is meagre. Then there are still others who feel like him about Jewish existence, but their sentiment is vague. Agnon is one of the few who have a sense of sanctity about the components of Jewish life. This sanctity is neither cold nor sentimental, it is glowing and firm—that is Agnon. Sanctity: not false, conceited and shot through with pose, but one which is right, quiet, humble, loyal. That is Agnon. He is des-

tined to be the poet and chronicler of Jewish life, both of that which is dying today and is in a state of metamorphosis; and also of that which is in the state of becoming and not yet known. Agnon is both from Galicia and Palestine, he is Hasid and pioneer, and he carries in his loyal heart the essence of both worlds in balance and in sanctity. Shall I tell you how we esteem him? We love him. (Letter #299)

The sampling could go on and on—but then the whole book is a sampler from which, at times, one tastes delicious tidbits (as when Agnon—who instructed Buber's son in Hebrew—inquires whether the latter remembered anything), and at times savours a full course (as in the correspondence with Gustav Landauer, Buber's close friend whose life was ended by a political assassin).

Ernst Simon, in his Preface, tell us that even as an old man Buber continued writing his letters by hand. It did not come easy; he had to work at it as he did with any personal relationship, and he was aware that (as Simon writes) "of all means of communication a letter is most particularly exposed to misunderstanding, because it is both direct and mediated speech." Matters became even more complicated because Buber achieved wide fame at any early age and was considered, as he himself noted, "an oracle." Letters to and from an oracle are soon touched by the mystery of prescience—and occasionally one begins to taste its flavour even in this first volume.

Grete Schaeder, herself a friend and long-time interpreter of Buber's, has made this selection from a prodigious amount of material available at the Hebrew University, and the result is a book extraordinary in every respect, which leaves one looking for the early appearance of its two successor volumes. Simon's hope that they be accorded adequate attention will not be disappointed.

The Jewish Gangster: Crime as "Unzer Shtik"

DAVID SINGER

By Way of Introduction: On Normalcy

THE CENTRAL THEME OF GAY TALESE'S RECENTLY published journalistic study of two generations of a Mafia family is that *mafiosi* are quite normal people.¹ Having spent almost seven years examining the careers of Joe Bonanno and his son, Bill, Talese is convinced that the two men are just like the rest of us—only more so. Talese, of course, is not the first writer on the subject of organized crime to insist that underworld figures have much the same attitudes and aspirations as members of "legitimate" society. Daniel Bell made precisely the same point almost twenty years ago in his classic, pioneering essay "Crime as an American Way of Life."² Organized crime, Bell argued, is a "Coney Island mirror caricaturing the morals and manners of a society." Far from rejecting conventional American values, underworld figures affirm them—albeit in a "queer" manner. Like most Americans, gangsters desire to attain social advancement and social prestige, and are, thus, preoccupied with "getting ahead" through various enterprises. Possessing the heroic virtues associated with "the man with the gun," they, like the hunters, cowboys, frontiersmen, and soldiers before them, seek to acquire "by personal merit what [is] denied to [them] by [the] complex orderings of a stratified society." Within the framework of America's "ever shifting structure of group, class, and ethnic stratification" then, criminal activity is simply one more way of achieving social ascent. Because of the functional role it plays in society, Bell concluded, organized crime is clearly very much a part of the American way of life. As for the mobsters themselves, they are, in terms of their relationship with society, quite obviously normal.

Viewing underworld figures as normal members of society opens up all kinds of possibilities for the study of organized crime in general. This essay, however, will deal exclusively with Jewish criminal activity as it is illuminated by the perspective on crime defined by Bell and Talese. Such a narrowing of the analytical focus is not without its justification. As the paradigmatic outsiders of Western society, Jews have, of course, been masters of social adaptation. Anti-Semites and parochial Jews alike

1. Gay Talese, *Honor Thy Father* (New York: World Publ. Co., 1971).

2. Daniel Bell, "Crime as an American Way of Life," *Antioch Review* (June, 1953), pp. 131-154.

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agree, citing a range of evidence from Sammy Glick to Henry Kissinger, that Jews are an achievement-oriented group, preoccupied with, and adept at, "making it," under often difficult circumstances. When given a little elbow room, as in the United States, Jews have, as measured by any indicator, performed extraordinarily well. The importance of Bell's and Talese's insight into organized crime in this context is that it enables us to see that Jewish gangsters are caught up in the same psycho-social syndrome as are other American Jews. Like the bright young men on the Ivy League campuses, the radical-chic literary intellectuals, the high-powered political confidants—all recognizable American Jewish types—Jewish mobsters are simply trying to earn a living and get ahead. Contemplating this basic fact of American Jewish social life, one is led to give expression to thoughts heretofore forbidden.

On History

American Jews constitute a culturally oppressed group. Jews are, of course, not commonly thought of as being such, the term "cultural oppression" being applied today only to Blacks, Indians, and other "minority" communities. Yet the fact of the matter is that American Jews have been systematically denied any awareness of a vitally important aspect of their history. Whereas, however, in the case of Blacks and other groups, the suppression of the true historical record has been due to outside influences, the censoring of the American Jewish past to eliminate any mention of Jewish crime has resulted from pressure within the Jewish community. Clearly fearing an anti-Semitic reaction and desiring, for assimilationist purposes, to project a "nice Jewish boy" image of the Jew, the American Jewish Establishment—the defense agencies, the scholars, the historical societies—has turned a blind eye to a fascinating and important facet of the history of American Jewry. That this was the case prior to 1945 is, while lamentable, at least understandable. That the practice of Jewish self-censorship in this area continues unabated today, however, makes a mockery of the claim that the American Jewish community is maturing. The refusal of the Jewish Establishment to examine dispassionately the record of American Jewish crime reveals a fundamental lack of security and self respect. In this instance the silence is deafening.

The central irony of the Jewish Establishment's unwillingness to come to grips with the history of Jewish crime in the United States is that the subject is perfectly suited for the kind of historical treatment most often found in studies of American Jewish history. With very few exceptions, writings about American Jewry, like those about other ethnic groups, have been self-congratulatory in nature, cataloguing the accomplishments of Jews, and their contributions to American society.

What I have in mind, of course, is the "Columbus was a Jew" syndrome. While one can seriously question the value of such an approach to historical writing, it is important to note the ease with which the story of Jewish mobsters can be assimilated to it. This is so because Jewish gangsters, like their Jewish counterparts in other areas of endeavor, have been immensely successful and important. One thinks, for example, of Arnold "The Brain" Rothstein, the "pioneer big businessman of crime, who, understanding the logic of co-ordination, sought to *organize* crime as a source of regular income." Rothstein's chief successors in the early 1930's were Lepke Buchalter and Gurrah Shapiro who, as the heads of "Murder, Inc.," pioneered in the field of industrial racketeering. It was Moe Annenberg who first made bookmaking a lucrative business when, in the 1920's, he established the racing-wire news service that "gather[ed] information from tracks and sho[t] it immediately to scratch sheets, horse parlors, and bookie joints." Las Vegas was the brainchild of Bugsy Siegel who built the Flamingo in what later became "Glitter Gulch." Most importantly of all, there is Meyer Lansky, financier, real real estate owner, amateur diplomat and—according to Hank Messick's *Lansky*³—Chairman of the Board of the National Crime Syndicate. These men, and a host of lesser figures who have been mentioned in published reports about the underworld—Moe Dalitz, Morris Kleinman, Sam Tucker, Louis Rothkopf, Waxey Gordon, Sam "Red" Levine, Charles "King" Solomon, Hyman Abrams, Phil "The Stick" Kovolick, Joe Bernstein, Nig Rosen, Abner "Longie" Zwillman, Mickey Cohen, Joseph "Doc" Stacher, Hyman "Curly" Holtz, Harry Teitlebaum, Louis "Shadows" Kravitz, Harry "Big Greenie" Greenberg, Isidore "Kid Cann" Blumenfeld, "Dandy Phil" Kastel, Jake Guzik, Abe Relis, Jacob "Yasha" Katzenberg, Louis Stark, Jack Shapiro, Solly Gross, Benny Harris, "Tootsie" Feinstein—constitute a veritable *Who's Who* in the annals of American crime, comparable to that contributed by any other ethnic group.

It requires no special justification to examine in a serious manner the record of Jewish criminal activity in the United States. The subject is part of American Jewish history, and, as such, deserves scholarly attention. At the same time, it is to be noted that a greater knowledge of Jewish gangsters will, in line with Bell's and Talese's perspective on organized crime, add appreciably to an understanding of the total American Jewish experience. One thinks, for example, of the generalizations that would emerge from a comparative analysis of the familial, social, and educational backgrounds of important Jewish mobsters and notable "legitimate" Jews. Other significant generalizations would issue from a comparison of the same two groups in terms of the personality

3. Hank Messick, *Lansky* (New York: Putnam, 1971).

traits and habits of mind that contributed to their success in their respective fields of activity. Valuable insights would be gained from a study of the similarities and differences in the social, political, and religious outlooks of Jewish gangsters and other, more "typical," American Jews. Equally informative would be a comparative examination of the impact of Jewish-Gentile relations on Jews inside and outside the criminal world. Finally, much would be learned from an analysis of the links between "legitimate" and criminal Jewish wealth, and between criminal Jewish wealth and Jewish political power. All in all, then, a vast store of knowledge can be gained by carefully scrutinizing the history of American Jewish crime.

On Identity

Cultural deprivation is only a part of the price that American Jewry has paid as a result of its ignorance of the facts about Jewish gangsters in the United States. A heavy toll in psychological damage has been exacted as well. I refer, specifically, to Jewish identity which has been crippled by a lack of available Jewish models. History and tradition, after all, are the stuff out of which ethnic and religious identity is compounded, and an impoverished awareness of the past results inevitably in an impaired sense of identity. In the case of American Jews, only one model of Jewishness, the "nice Jewish boy," has been available. Other models, particularly the Jewish mobster, have been systematically ignored. The result has been the "Jewish identity crisis" that has occasioned so much breastbeating in the Jewish community.

There are, no doubt, those who will argue that far worse evils than an identity crisis will result if American Jews are familiarized with the record of Jewish crime in the United States. Ironically, however, it may well be that such familiarization will, in fact, contribute to the Jewish Establishment's own aim of producing "respectable" Jews. What has to be borne in mind in this context is that a knowledge of Jewish mobsters will provide American Jews not only with a valuable Jewish model, but also with a vitally important, but harmless, Jewish vehicle for emotional catharsis. At present, Jews in the United States largely lack the means of expressing, in a Jewish framework, the aggressive drive that is inherent in the human personality. Little or no provision is made in American Jewish life for the satisfaction of this drive because it is supposedly "un-Jewish" and, therefore, totally alien to the "nice Jewish boy." Such rhetoric, of course, does not help, and those flesh and blood Jewish boys (and girls) who cannot suppress the aggressive drive turn in desperation to non-Jewish and even anti-Jewish channels of catharsis. (The Jews of the New Left are a pathetic and frightening case in point.) What is obviously needed, therefore, is a Jewish cathartic vehicle, and

an excellent, i.e., fantasy confined, one is readily at hand in the history of American Jewish crime. The cathartic value of a close scrutiny of criminal careers was underscored years ago by Robert Warshow in his seminal essay "The Gangster as Tragic Hero."⁴ Warshow's analysis of this point, which is directly relevant to the issue of Jewish emotional needs, has been recently restated by Joseph Epstein as follows:

We are all hooked on crime, because, as Warshow knew, in our innermost beings most of us partly wish to be gangsters ourselves . . . The gangster, at least as popularly conceived, is a man who need suppress nothing—his whole career, to the extent that it is successful, being a riotous binge of aggression, swinging out freely, grabbing, screwing, killing, taking whom and what he damn-well pleases . . . The fundamental attraction of the gangster in Warshow's words is that "he is what we want to be and what we are afraid we may become."

. . . It is wonderful, possibly even therapeutic, to watch him run rampant, satisfying every one of those instincts the rest of us, consciously or unconsciously, have chosen to suppress.⁵

Taking a cue from Warshow's analysis then, it seems clear that the Jewish Establishment would best serve its own interest by affording American Jews every possible opportunity to delve into the story of Jewish crime. Jews able to "do their own ethnic thing" in terms of achieving cathartic release will have little reason to go outside of the Jewish community in search of it. Indulging the fantasy needs of American Jews will be a safe, simple, and effective way of promoting both their emotional stability and ethnic loyalty, which are essential ingredients of Jewish "respectability."

Establishments, of course, are not in the habit of changing, and it is highly unlikely that the Jewish Establishment will, in fact, move to strengthen Jewish identity and to provide a Jewish cathartic vehicle by acquainting American Jews with the history of Jewish mobsters. In that case, the field will be left wide open for the Jewish Defense League which is ready, indeed eager, to fill the psychological void currently existing in American Jewish life. The J.D.L. is an extremely complex phenomenon, and it is sheer nonsense to attempt, as some have done, to reduce it to a Jewish psychodrama. At the same time, it is important to note that a large part of the Jewish Defense League's appeal in the Jewish community has been based on its brilliant manipulation of the twin issues of Jewish identity and Jewish cathartic release. Precisely this point was emphasized by the writer of the first significant feature article about the League which appeared in *Esquire* in August 1970.⁶ Writing under the title "Three Meanies," Roy Bongartz discussed the Weathermen, Red (Indian) Power advocates, and the J.D.L.—all of

4. Robert Warshow, "The Gangster as Tragic Hero," in *The Immediate Experience* (Garden City: Atheneum Press, 1962), pp. 127-133.

5. Joseph Epstein, "Browsing in Gangland," *Commentary* (January, 1972), pp. 46-55.

6. Roy Bongartz, "Three Meanies," *Esquire* (August, 1970), pp. 42-48.

whom, he argued, had abandoned respectability, and were endeavoring by word and deed to project a "tough-guy" image of themselves. The section of Bongartz's article dealing with the League was entitled "Superjew," and it began by quoting Meir Kahane's statement that "the Jewish Defense League was formed to change an image, and, frankly, we don't give a damn what you think of us." To make certain that there was no confusion on the part of the reader about the kind of image that the J.D.L. wanted to project, "Three Meanies" featured a full page portrait of a ferocious looking American Jewish youth contemptuously sticking out his tongue at the world. This image, of course, remains central to the Jewish Defense League today both in its rhetoric (e.g. the J.D.L. slogan: "Never Again;" the J.D.L. fund-raising pitch: "Is this any way for nice Jewish boys to behave?;" the J.D.L. summer [karate and riflery] camp motto: "They used to send us to camps, but now we have our own camp") and its activities (*vide* news reports in the *New York Times* and *Time*). To the chagrin of the Jewish Establishment, the J.D.L. has definitely gained a measure of acceptance in the American Jewish community, particularly among the young. It could hardly be otherwise, however, given the meager psychological resources typically made available to American Jews. If the Jewish Establishment is unwilling to do so, the Jewish Defense League will assume the task, in Alex Portnoy's words, of "putting the id back in Yid."

On Zionism

"Putting the id back in Yid." What better definition could there be of the Zionist aim, by which the ambiguities of Jewish history and Jewish identity are, at last, overcome? To speak of Zionism, of course, is to speak of Israel, and, in the context of a discussion of Jewish crime, to speak of Israel is to speak of Meyer Lansky.

Though they have differed about a great many things, Zionist ideologues have been nearly unanimous in insisting that a fundamental aim of Zionism is the "normalization" of the Jewish people. The importance that Zionist thinkers have attached to the notion of "normalization" can be gauged from the fact that the editor of a recent anthology of anti-Zionist writings entitled his book, *Zionism Reconsidered: The Rejection of Jewish Normalcy*.⁷ In his introduction to the volume, Michael Selzer correctly indicates that "Zionism's drive did not stem from Messianism but from an utterly mundane and openly avowed desire to 'normalize' the situation and personality of the Jewish people." Elaborating on this point, Selzer continues:

. . . underlying the political revolution which the Zionists hoped to ac-

7. Michael Selzer, ed., *Zionism Reconsidered: The Rejection of Jewish Normalcy* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1970).

comply was the even more revolutionary social and cultural normalization which the anticipated political revolution implied and on which it depended. Full equality in the comity of nations would be secured only after the Jews had altered the fabric of their lives. . . . Political normalization would be an effect, and not the cause, of social and cultural normalization. The inner revolution would have to precede the external one.

The precise nature of this "inner revolution," that would make the Jews "like every other people" (the phrase is from Israel's Declaration of Independence), has always been a point of contention among Zionist ideologues, but no less a figure than Hayyim Nahman Bialik, the "Jewish national poet," was prepared to state that a "normal Jewish nation will have arrived the day the first Jewish horse thief is arrested in Tel-Aviv." The day of the horse thief is over, of course, but one need only be a casual tourist or even a casual newspaper reader to know that Bialik's Zionist dream has become an Israeli reality.

A Jewish Mafia in Israel? Indeed so—or at least so claims Ran Kislev, an investigative reporter for *Ha'aretz*, Israel's counterpart of the *New York Times*. In a series of articles written in 1970 that provoked widespread discussion and a follow-up inquiry by the Attorney General, Kislev argued that a definite pattern of organized crime exists in Israel, that it is modeled after the American Mafia, and that it is headed by the "Godfather," Mordechai "Mentesh" Zarfati. Zarfati's own "family," according to Kislev, operates in the fields of protection, vice, gambling, and debt collecting, and it is not at all reluctant to use strong arm tactics when these are thought necessary. Kislev also maintains that Zarfati, in true Mafia style, has "connections" reaching into high government places. This claim, as well as others by Kislev, has been disputed by Meir Shamgar, Israel's Attorney General, but Kislev's arguments and evidence seem generally convincing. In any case, it is obvious that criminal activity is very much a part of the Israeli way of life. And why not, given the centrality to that way of life of the Zionist aspiration of creating a "normal" Jewish people? The *goyim* have their gangsters, and the Jews in Israel have theirs—it is both natural and appropriate. It is also, one can venture to state, deeply reassuring to a veteran Zionist like Meyer Lansky.

Meyer Lansky is a remarkable phenomenon, and he deserves better than the treatment he receives at the hands of Hank Messick. Within its limits, Messick's *Lansky* is quite successful, but it lacks the analytic and psychological depth necessary for a definitive study of its subject. What Messick has done is to put together an exhaustive anthology of underworld gossip about Lansky, which makes for absorbing reading, although the complete lack of documentation is irritating. Because he adopts a highly moralistic "good guys—bad guys" approach to Lansky, however, Messick fails to provide a sufficiently broad framework in which

to view the reputed master gangster's activities. Yet, the central historical significance of Lansky's criminal career is that he, more so than any other figure, has, in the words of Joseph Epstein, "do[ne] for crime what the Rockefellers, Morgans, and Carnegies did for capitalism." At every stage in the transition from the "Era of Balls" to the "Era of Brains," Lansky has consciously labored to make organized crime "big . . . smooth and corporatized." To "expand . . . organize . . . and make . . . 'rational' "—this has always been Lansky's central aim as a gangster, and he has been remarkably successful. Lansky's dream of an "organization of gangsters along jurisdictional lines as well as cutting across ethnic ties," has become a reality, and what was once a "cottage industry of independent operators" has been metamorphosed into the National Crime Syndicate. Small wonder, then, that Lansky allegedly sits as "Chairman of the Board." Messick, of course, is aware of all this, and it is indeed implicit in his book, but in his zeal to prove that Lansky is evil incarnate, he all too often sacrifices significant generalization for a welter of details.

The lack of analytic depth in Messick's discussion of Lansky's criminal career is matched by a lack of psychological depth in his treatment of Lansky's personality. Probing the personality of a gangster is always a difficult task, of course, and Messick, given his attitude toward Lansky, could hardly have asked for a private interview. The fact remains, however, that in large part Messick fails to provide a convincing portrait of Lansky as a flesh and blood human being because he isn't really interested in what makes Lansky tick. Being totally absorbed with his subject as the arch criminal, Messick is content to fall back on the stock explanation that Lansky desires limitless power and wealth. Maybe so, but for Maier Suchowljansky—son of Max and Yetta, born in Grodno, Poland in 1902, brought to the United States in 1911, graduate of P.S. 34 and the Lower East Side school of hard knocks—this might well be a form of Jewish self-expression. In a society in which crime is a way of life, the drive for Jewish "normalization" might well lead Lansky, who, of all things, was born on the fourth of July, to attempt to beat the *goyim* at their own game. Lansky—a Zionist Yankee Doodle Dandy! It is a startling image, of course, but one that goes a long way toward explaining Lansky's recent application for Israeli citizenship. For the Chairman of the Board, who embodies in his career the Zionist aim of Jewish "normalcy," and who has always been a United Jewish Appeal stalwart, settling in Israel is the logical final step. Unfortunately, the Israeli Supreme Court has rejected Lansky's application on the grounds that he is a gangster. Logic, compassion, and a faithfulness to the enigma of Jewish existence should have dictated that Lansky be awarded Israeli citizenship precisely *because* of what he is.

The Maccabean Martyrs: Early Christian Attitudes

DONALD F. WINSLOW

THE TRADITION THAT WOULD RECOGNIZE A direct line of continuity between the Maccabees of the second century B.C.E., the Zealots of the time of Jesus, and all subsequent expressions of Jewish nationalism is one to which attention has often been drawn. Less often has attention been drawn to the abiding influence of another element within the context of Jewish resistance to foreign rule, namely, the strategy of non-violent resistance as exemplified supremely by the Maccabean martyrs. It might be possible, in fact, to advance the thesis that the Maccabean *martyrs*, rather than the Maccabean *rebels* (e.g., Mattathias and his sons), were the more effective instruments in stemming the anti-Jewish policies of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Only a thorough study of the Biblical understanding of martyrdom, however, would substantiate such a thesis.

Yet the purpose of this paper is less ambitious. Given the recognized influence of the Maccabean rebels, is it possible to determine a parallel influence exercised by the Maccabean martyrs? Jewish literature, of course, is not without its references to the sacrifice of Eleazar and of Hannah with her seven children. The events of 2nd Mac. 6:18–7:42 have stirred the hearts of more than a few later Jewish exegetes. Shalom Spiegel, in his splendid book, *The Last Trial* (New York, 1967), has recalled those sources which compare the suffering of the Maccabean mother to the sacrifice of Abraham: whereas the latter was but a *trial*, the former was a *performance*; Abraham's offering was on but one altar, while that of the mother was on seven.

It is within the literature of the ancient Christian church that we find the most persistent and deeply felt recognition of the heroic deeds of the Maccabean martyrs. John Chrysostom, for instance, who is otherwise noted for the vehemence of his verbal attacks upon the Jews, began a sermon in honor of the Maccabees with unbounded enthusiasm:

How bright our city and joyful, and this day sunnier than all the days of the year! Not that the sun sheds its ray more splendidly today than usual upon the earth, but that the light of the Holy Martyrs shines like lightning over our whole city.

Can Chrysostom's praise of the Maccabees rest upon his metropolitan zeal, upon his wishing to share with the people of Antioch—where the Maccabees are traditionally said to have been martyred—a sense of civic

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pride in past glories? This might be so were not similar Christian panegyrics found in abundance in locations far distant from Antioch. Perhaps Chrysostom was constrained by the requirements of the liturgical calendar to acknowledge the Maccabees, since August 1st had been assigned as their feast day. This, too, is difficult to imagine, since pre-calendar, non-liturgical references to the Maccabees also exist in abundance. We can only suppose that, in spite of the intensity with which Jews were castigated by Christians of the ancient church, the Maccabean martyrs found within early Christendom a place of high stature. It is to the presentation and analysis of this phenomenon that the remainder of this paper is devoted.

Not all contemporary Christian scholars have been as appreciative of the Maccabean martyrs as was the ancient church. W. H. C. Frend (*Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* [Oxford, 1965]), for instance, sees their martyrdom merely as an expression of Jewish nationalism, asserting that these pre-Christian martyrs were something like a "Hamlet" looking for a "Prince" (p. 67f). R. B. Townshend, on the other hand, in his classic study of 4th Maccabees, makes the unqualified assertion that, had Judaism as a religion perished under the Antiochene persecution, the "seed-bed of Christianity would have been lacking; and thus the blood of the Maccabean martyrs, who saved Judaism, ultimately became the seed of the Church" (Charles [ed.], *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 659). It is this latter view which is, as we shall see, more consonant with the attitudes of the early church. Anti-Jewish polemic there was, but we shall discover that it was not the Jewishness of the Maccabean martyrs which informed early Christian attitudes but precisely their martyrdom, for in the last analysis authentic martyrdom knows no religious boundaries.

We select four figures for consideration; Origen and Cyprian from the pre-Constantinian period, and Augustine and Gregory of Nazianzus from the post-Constantinian. The first two lived in a period of persecution and were, themselves, martyrs, so their writings will reflect the immediacy of this situation. The other two lived in a time when peace between church and state had been achieved, so their writings will reflect a calmer and less occasional approach to the subject.

Cyprian

The major reference to the Maccabees in Cyprian's extant works occurs in his Treatise 11, *Epistola ad Fortunatum*. There, he describes the Maccabees as noble examples in the long history of those who, by virtue of their devotion to God, encounter persecution. Martyrdom, therefore, is not solely a phenomenon of the Christian era, but has its roots going back through Jewish history, even as far as Abel, the first righteous man to be slain out of envy. True religion, claims Cyprian, is

a narrow road, accompanied by severe hardships, and to realize this is to garner strength to face the trials of one's own day.

Relying throughout on the work of the "Epitomist" (2nd Maccabees), and quoting freely from it, Cyprian rehearses the narrative with few embellishments. His stress is not so much on the bravery of the martyrs as upon their faithful relation to God; nothing Antiochus can devise in the way of torture can endanger this relation. As a result, not only will the martyrs be raised, but Antiochus and those who fight against God (*pugnare cum Deo*) definitely will *not* be raised; their lot is to be punished, they and their seed. In fine, Cyprian is content to recite the story of the martyrdom, stressing the original themes of resurrection and retribution, all with the intent of providing for his readers an example of sincere faith and sound virtue. Not once does he question the validity of the Maccabees' martyrdom, nor does he see the "Jewishness" of the martyrs as detracting in any way from the grandeur of their accomplishment. The only point he does make, which could be construed as favoring the Christian martyrs over their Jewish predecessors, is that, while ancient examples of martyrdom can be counted, *numerari non possunt martyres Christiani*. This is due, he claims (not without a note of pride), to an increase of virtue and faith among contemporary Christians, greater than in any previous time. And the very plenitude of Christian martyrs, Cyprian concludes, helps us realize that to become a martyr is neither so arduous nor so difficult as one might think. Cyprian was to discover for himself the truth (or untruth) of this careless assertion!

Yet a rehearsal of past examples of faithfulness is not enough. As Christian bishop of Carthage, Cyprian is constrained to insert some elements not found in the original narrative. Without violating the historical context of the events to which he refers, he adds some epigrammatic interpretations which are manifestly Christian, at least typologically. Antiochus, for instance, is pointedly referred to as "Anti-Christ." The second of the brothers, from whose head the hair had been torn in the course of his tortures, Cyprian portrays as a symbol of Christ, the head (*caput*) of man; accordingly, since God is the head of Christ, he who persecutes the martyr thus persecutes also God and his Christ. Again, the third brother, who stretches out his hands to have them cut off, is a ready symbol of the "passion of the Lord" whose hands were stretched out on the cross.

These interpretative insertions into a pre-Christian narrative are as far as Cyprian goes in the direction of using the Maccabees in the interests of a developing theology of martyrdom. Yet they are indicative of a strand of thought, beginning with Ignatius of Antioch, which identifies the death of the martyr as never undergone apart from Christ. Cyprian himself does not make such a claim explicit, but in the documents yet

to be examined this theme will reoccur with greater clarity and insistence.

Origen

In his *Exhortation to Martyrdom*, addressed to two young deacons of Caesarea who had suffered under the persecution of Maximus Thrax, Origen refers to the Maccabees as a ready example of courage in the face of adversity. More than the Cyprianic stress on the martyrs' enduring relation to God, Origen underlines their unflinching bravery. Quoting freely and accurately from 2nd Maccabees, he weaves into the narrative vocabulary taken from the Greek Games: the martyrs are "athletes," their struggle a "contest," their accomplishments a "victory." Further, Origen underscores an element barely touched upon in the original source, namely, the freedom of the martyrs. Eleazar, for instance, he epitomizes with these words: "Who could be more eloquently praised for his death than he who, for the sake of piety, accepts death of his own free will?"

Whereas Cyprian introduced into his treatise a certain amount of specifically Christian symbolism, Origen refrains from doing so, at least explicitly. Beyond a passing reference to the Logos as the operative factor in the death of a martyr (the martyr is also deified by the Word), Origen attempts no Christianizing of the Maccabees. More important to him than the religious pedigree of a particular martyr is the example of martyrdom itself. Which is to say, Origen's approach to the Maccabees is essentially moral, and moral from a specifically exemplarist viewpoint.

Origen recognizes, as did Cyprian, the themes of resurrection and retribution; he also makes mention of the strong stress laid by 2nd Maccabees on the element of corporate guilt. The martyrs are suffering for *their* sins, and, by extension, for the sins of Israel. Yet the overriding concern of Origen's account is the assertion that no great act of heroism, no faithful suffering goes unnoticed by God. God sees all and rewards and punishes according to what he sees. Cyprian had offered comfort to the martyr by alluding to his eventual resurrection and to the judgment that would inevitably be visited upon his persecutors. Origen, in turn, holds out comfort to the prospective martyrs by reference to the comprehensive vision of God: ". . . all was seen by God; and the conviction that the eye of God was upon [the Maccabees] was enough to strengthen them for the trial."

Origen's straightforward account, so lacking in the speculative strains found in his other writings, raises no problems for the exegete. His conclusions are simple: love for God and human weakness cannot dwell together, while true piety and devotion are the equal of any adversary. Origen makes no mention of the "Jewishness" of the Macca-

bees, nor does he raise the question of their being pre-Christian. However, at the end of his account he is constrained to address a poignant admonition to his readers. Quoting first the Psalmist's assertion that "the Lord is my strength and my hymn," he then adds, from the New Testament, "All things are possible to me through our Lord Jesus Christ who gives me strength" (Phil. 4:13).

Augustine

In turning from Cyprian and Origen to Augustine, we enter the post-Constantinian era in which persecution was no longer an immediate threat to the Christian church. It is no surprise, then, that in Augustine's Sermon 300 (*In solemnitate martyrum Machabaeorum*) we encounter a marked change of style and attitude. Augustine addresses himself, not to a situation of contemporary persecution, but to a memory of the past. There is, in the sermon, no rehearsal of the martyr narrative (this may have been included in the lection), nor any reference, as with Cyprian and Origen, to the themes of retribution, resurrection, or corporate guilt. There is no need for mentioning these, since Augustine does not have to strengthen his congregation's resolve in the face of potential tribulation. Facing no immediate crisis, Augustine does not feel the need to exhort; but neither is he content solely to remember.

As the sermon develops, it becomes apparent that Augustine has a purpose in remembering the Maccabees, namely, to speak to a question upon which Cyprian and Origen had neither the desire nor the leisure to speculate. The question can be simply stated: What are fourth-century Christians to make of the Maccabees since their martyrdom took place "before the incarnation and passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?" The first answer which comes to mind is that, even before there were Christians, there was always a *populum Dei*. Before his passion, Christ had a people of his own, a people who were Christian in everything but name, a people born to the very Abraham who rejoiced to see the day of Christ (John 8:56). From these people sprang the Maccabees, so even though at the time of their persecution Christ had not yet died, it was still *his* death that made them martyrs (*martyres eos fecit moriturus Christus*).

A second answer to the question continues this line of thought. If the Maccabees (like the People of God) were Christian in everything but name, so, too, what they *did* can be called Christian. They did not, in fact, *confess* Christ, but it is important to realize that Antiochus could not persuade them to deny (*negare*) Christ. Just as for Augustine the Old Testament is the "veil" of the New, or the New Testament the "unveiling" of the Old, so, too, the "veiled" confession of the Maccabees became the "open" confession of the Christian martyrs. Which leads Augustine to conclude that August 1st is a specifically Christian Feast

Day, inasmuch as those who "died for the Law of Moses died also for Christ."

But Augustine's purpose is not merely to explain how Christians of his day can appropriately honor the Maccabean martyrs. He uses the occasion also to insert into his panegyric an element of anti-Jewish apologetic. This he does by introducing a Jewish "straw-man" who takes issue with the Christians for attributing "Christian" characteristics to those martyrs who should be more readily honored as heroes of Judaism. Augustine answers his fictitious "straw-man" with more enthusiasm than charity, accusing him of being one of those Jews who could not, and would not, realize that the Old Testament was a book about Christ. The fault lies, not with the Christians who honor the Maccabees, but with the Jews who fail to honor the true Messiah. Augustine presses his argument further by pointing out that the church building in Antioch, constructed on the very ground where the Maccabees were martyred, was built, not by Jews, but by Christians.

For neither Cyprian nor Origen was the "Jewishness" of the Maccabees an issue. But, for Augustine, the abiding difference, as he saw it, between Jew and Christian could not be overlooked. Needless to say, his attitude somewhat compromised the degree to which he would have his congregation both remember and emulate the faith of the Maccabees.

Gregory of Nazianzus

Gregory's 15th Oration, entitled *In laudem Machabaeorum*, is, of the documents presented in this essay, the most fruitful for our purposes in that it displays the most fully-developed and self-conscious approach to the Maccabees. Like Augustine, Gregory raises the question of the "pre-Christian status" of the martyrs:

Who were the Maccabees? Because their martyrdom took place before the time of Christ, their Festival, which occurs today, is not generally observed. Yet we all should honor them because of their patient endurance for the sake of the tradition of their Fathers.

Gregory proceeds to answer his original query by pointing out that part of the glory of the Maccabees lies precisely in the fact that they *were* martyred before Christ:

Since they were martyrs before the time of Christ's passion, imagine how much more they would have done had they been persecuted after Christ, and had *his* death as an example to imitate! If, without benefit of such an example, they exhibited such virtue, surely they would have exhibited even nobler virtues had they undergone such tortures with this example before them. . . . Such men [therefore] should not be overlooked, merely because their suffering occurred before the Cross; rather, it is precisely because they *did* suffer before the Cross that they are so praiseworthy.

Yet Gregory goes even further in pursuing this question of pre-

Christian martyrdom. Even if the Maccabees' martyrdom, he argues, took place *before* Christ, it did not take place *apart from* Christ. This is because "no one who was martyred before the coming of Christ could have attained his goal apart from Christ. The Word, of course, did appear later at specific times, but it had been known earlier by those who were pure in heart." The Maccabees, then, were intimates of the Logos, parallel to Cyprian's view of them as the *populum Dei*.

Having established, as it were, the credentials of the Maccabees, Gregory goes on to rehearse the martyr narrative, but, unlike Cyprian and Origen (and probably Augustine), he uses 4th Maccabees as his source. The change from 2nd Maccabees is immediately apparent. The "religion" of the earlier source becomes the "philosophy" of the later source, and the very Hellenism of the foreign persecutor becomes the instrument by which he is ridiculed. As 4th Maccabees personifies Reason (*logismos*) and even places it on a level with the Law, so, too, Gregory sees reason as the operative element within the suffering martyr:

What drove [the Maccabees] to exhibit such virtue and honor, so that even today we honor them with yearly festivals and celebrations so that all men may store up in their hearts their many marvellous deeds? The Book in which their story is written will reveal these things to those who love learning and are diligent. It is a Book which discourses on the fact that Reason is superior to suffering and is the master of any crisis . . .

Also unique to 4th Maccabees and to Gregory's account is the view of the martyr's death as an expiation or ransom (*antipsychon*). Eleazar, for instance, he describes as one who offered himself as a "perfect sacrifice to God, as a purification for all the people." Gregory makes use, too, of the concepts, from 4th Maccabees, of the transformation of the soul into incorruptibility, of the return of the martyr to his Fathers, and of the final goal of martyrdom, to be with God. He has the brothers, for instance, address Antiochus in this manner:

Sweet to us indeed is this world, and the land of our Fathers, our friends, parents, and kinfolk . . . [Yet] we have another world, more exalted and more abiding than the one which you now see. This is the "Jerusalem above" which no Antiochus can besiege or ever hope to conquer.

A further difference made by Gregory's use of 4th Maccabees as a source is seen in the wealth of imaginative detail with which he embroiders his narrative. The "Epitomist" told his tale of the martyrdom simply and with economy, inventing little in the way of dramatic elaboration; 4th Maccabees goes much further, adding a considerable amount of material in order to heighten the drama as well as to promote a certain philosophical ideal; but Gregory goes the furthest and outdoes them both. Speeches are invented, relationships are changed, and descriptive details are added which are often no less gruesome as verbal instruments than were the instruments of torture. One brief example will suffice by way of illustration:

[The mother surpassed] all other mothers, even the priests, by leading forward as burnt offerings, as ready victims, these eager lambs to the slaughter. She bared her breasts, calling to mind the nourishment they once had given; she held out her grey hairs, offering her old age in the place of the suppliant's usual olive branch. She sought not to be saved, but hastened towards her trials in the belief that the postponement of them, not death itself, was the real danger. Nothing turned her from her purpose, nothing sapped her spirit, nothing made her lose her courage—neither the stretching-racks ranged before her, nor the torture wheels in the foreground, nor the contrivances for dislocating the joints, nor the catapults, nor the points of the iron claws, nor the sharpened spears, nor the seething cauldrons, nor the ready-kindled fire, nor the threatening tyrant, nor the spectators, nor the urging of the spearmen, nor even the sight of her off-spring, dismembered and their bodies lacerated, nor the flowing rivers of their blood . . .

For Origen and Cyprian, the Maccabean martyrs were noble examples of pious endurance, but from among many other such examples. For Gregory, however, the Maccabees shine forth as *the* example from pre-Christian history of courage, fidelity, and godliness. Parallel to a Jewish commentary already referred to above, Gregory has this to say about the martyrdom:

What remarkable generosity and magnanimity! This was a sacrifice greater even than Abraham's, had he seen it through to the end. Abraham willingly offered *one* son . . . but this mother consecrated to God a whole nation of children.

The almost excessive praise which Gregory reserves for the Maccabees expresses itself in specifically Christian terms as well. Eleazar is the first-fruits of those who suffered before Christ, just as Stephen was the first-fruits of those who suffered after Christ. And the mother is quite clearly seen as the prototype of the "Mother of Sorrows," blessed among women, to whom great honor will be rendered.

One final note about Gregory's Oration. Although it was written in the post-Constantinian era, Gregory's call to an imitation of the Maccabean martyrs was not an idle one since, he thought, enemies were never lacking to the devout Christian, whether an apostate Julian, an Arianizing Valens, a threatening Modestus, or the Devil himself! He wanted to remind his congregation of the Maccabees so that they might have them as an example, in the event of their own tribulation, or, against the Antiochus of their day, "who fights against all our members and persecutes us on all sides."

* * *

Our survey of select patristic texts dealing with the martyrdom of the Maccabees has indicated the extent to which the ancient church was influenced by those patriots who chose to die rather than compromise the traditions of their Fathers. The evidence points to an appreciation of the Maccabees that was more directed towards religious piety than towards any expression of nationalism. The Maccabees, as we have

already suggested, were seen first as "martyrs," and only then, if at all, as "Jews." Their martyrdom was valid, true, pure, worthy of imitation, and pious; it was an example of an ascetic ideal common to the whole of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The "appropriation" of the Maccabees into the liturgical calendar raised only one problem, namely, the date of their martyrdom, i.e., before Christ. But a developing understanding of Christ as the pre-existent Logos was the ready solution to this problem. The solution said, in effect, that we need not worry if the Maccabees were martyred before Christ since Christ himself was, and was known, before the Maccabees.

In only one text did we find any anti-Jewish apologetic; in the others, the Jewishness of the Maccabees was never raised. This leads to the conclusion that martyrdom may be more of a universal phenomenon than many believe, at least universal enough to transcend religious differences. Jew and Christian alike might profit from a more extensive study of this phenomenon than this paper has been able to present.¹

1. *Note on the sources:*

(a) Solomon Zeitlin (ed.), *The Second Book of Maccabees* (New York, 1954), introduction, Greek text, and commentary; Eng. trans. of text by Sidney Tedesche.

(b) Moses Hadas (ed.), *The Third and Fourth Books of Maccabees* (New York, 1953), introduction, Greek text, Eng. trans., and commentary.

(c) Cyprian, *Ad Fortunatum*. Text in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, IV, col. 677-702; translation in Robertson & Donaldson (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, V, pp. 496-507.

(d) Origen, *Exhortation to Martyrdom*. Text in P. Koetschau (ed.), *Origenes Werke*, I (*Die griechischen christlichen schriftsteller*); translation in Baillie, et al. (eds.), *Library of Christian Classics*, III, pp. 393-429.

(e) Augustine, *In solemnitate martyrum Machabaeorum*. Text in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, XXXVIII, col. 1376-1380; translation in Quincy Howe, Jr. (ed. & trans.), *Selected Sermons of St. Augustine* (New York, 1966), pp. 135 ff.

(f) Gregory of Nazianzus, *In laudem Machabaeorum*. Text in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, XXXV, col. 911-934; and J. Vérin (ed.), *Grégoire de Nazianze, Panégyrique des Macchabées* (Paris, 1903); translations in this article are from the Vérin text.

“Hu Ha-goral”: The Religious Significance of Esther

ABRAHAM D. COHEN

THE BOOK OF *Esther* IS ONE OF THE LAST WORKS in the Bible. It is followed only by the book of Ezra-Nehemiah, and the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, all dealing with the single last phase of Biblical history, and describing events separated by less than a half-century from *Esther*.

Esther is the dramatic account of a major anti-Semitic plot which unravels within the halls of Persian political intrigue, but which is headed off by the heroic and self-sacrificing efforts of an elderly Jew and his orphaned cousin. Ever since its inclusion in Scriptures, *Esther*, enrobed in the colorful cloak of Purim, has delighted and uplifted Jewish hearts. Countless generations have recognized its story as their own, and gained hope, in sombre moments of history, that the Hamans they knew would be brought low. Hamans, Ahasueruses, Mordechais, and Esthers aplenty, since the days of Purim of old, have lent increasing fascination to the timeless and recurring saga of *Esther*. But if *Esther* retains its fascination, it may have lost its historical and religious credibility in modern eyes. Modern scholars, impressed by the absence of God's name and by a gentile mood in the book, question its Jewish roots and religious nature.¹ This challenge to *Esther* is crucial. Within the context of Purim, *Esther* may continue, at least for some time, to inspire a shared identification of peril and hope, and it obviously can continue, in a secularized form, requiring no justification, to arouse celebration and joy. But can its Biblical character any longer be defended, and its religious nature be justified—the only marks that can save *Esther* from eventual spiritual dethronement and demise?

On the basis of several details within the book, which have either been inadequately understood or gone unobserved, we will attempt to establish the unmistakable Judaic religious character of *Esther*. While

1. Christian scholars have also criticized the moral characters of Esther and Mordechai: Mordechai for not bowing to Haman because of “ethnic and religious prejudices . . .” (*Esther*, The Anchor Bible, C. Moore, ed., [Doubleday, 1971]), p. 42 and Esther for extending the fighting in Susa, and “her ‘failure’ to intercede for Haman in VII 9 . . .” (Moore, p. 88). Moore notes that a few Christian scholars have found Vashti, by her refusal, “to be the only admirable person in the book . . .” (Ibid, p. 13). Such observations, invariably, have something to tell us only about their author's views.

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our discussion will leave unresolved some of the oft-observed historical difficulties, it will suggest that an understanding of the book's religious character demands alternative explanations to some of the faulty historical and literary perspectives which have achieved wide acceptance in the modern study of *Esther*.

The *pur* has always troubled modern scholars. From the outset, it was suspected that the statement *hipil pur hu hagoral* (*Esther*, 3:7) i.e., "the *pur*, that is the lot" (Anchor trans.), betrayed the author's ignorance of the original meaning of the word *pur*. Jewish scholars, no less than non-Jews, have questioned the *pur*. M. Segal is puzzled that Purim "is called by a gentile name, and for an unessential aspect of the event."² H. Schauss similarly questions calling a festival, not "from the essence of the day" but from "an unimportant incident . . . the throwing of lots,"³ and concludes that the explanation of the name Purim given by *Esther* "was conceived in later times" and the original meaning of the word remains obscure. According to T. Gaster, "Purim goes back to the old Persian New Year Festival . . . and *pur* denotes, not a lot, but 'first day, or first season.'"⁴

Notwithstanding these lingering doubts, it now appears to have been clearly established that the megillah's understanding of *pur* is faultless and, as we will try to show, even more so than is currently assumed. C. Moore, in his recent commentary, briefly restates, and responds to, the problem. "Certainly, modern scholars have felt the explanation for Purim's name, in 9:26, to be strained and unconvincing." However, "Julius Lewy ended all debate on this particular point by showing clearly that the Bab. *pūru* does mean lot, and, secondarily, 'fate.'" (Anchor Bible, xlvii).⁵

Assuming that *Esther* has properly understood the word *pur*, is the term any less secondary and incidental than Segal and Schauss believe? Y. Kaufmann justifies the *pur* within the context of *Esther*:

The author of *Esther* is caught in the beliefs of his time, and like the rest of the authors of Scriptures, he believes in the power of divining, and in the "finger of God" which is sometimes expressed through it. There is a common element here between the book of *Esther* and the stories of Daniel. In a period devoid of Hebrew prophecy, God sometimes offered masked hints, particularly to idolators, through the medium of divination . . . To the narrator, Haman's *pur* is not a detail of secondary importance. The name of the holiday (Purim), the lengthy period

2. *Mavo Hamikra* (Kiryat Sefer), vol. 3-4, p. 724 ff.

3. *Guide to Jewish Holy Days* (N.Y.: Schocken Paperback, 1962), p. 310.

4. *Festivals of the Jewish Year* (N.Y.: William Sloane Associates, 1953), p. 221.

5. "The correctness of the Hebrew synonym is now attested by a number of Assyrian texts in which 'puru' has the meaning of lot, 'die,' and is employed in connection with a verb, 'to throw,' 'to cause to fall.'" *The Interpreters' Bible*, *Esther*, p. 849. This is the view of W. Albright, *Ibid.*, p. 825. Tur-Sinai seems to stand alone, and without justification, in asserting that the word is of Hebrew origin. *Pshuto-shel-Mikra* (Kiryat Sefer), vol. 4b, p. 182.

of casting the lot, and the explanation in 9:24-6 show that this is the pivotal point of the story: in the *pur* the "finger" of God operated. Haman divined and found an appropriate day for his evil scheme. God overturned it, from a day of evil to a day of good-tiding for Israel. The hidden meaning of the *pur* was neither understood by Haman nor by the Jews at that time. But the concealed "hand" finally revealed that which was "hidden." (trans.)⁶

While Kaufmann senses the unmistakable importance of the *pur*, he fails to decipher its meaning. For, like other contemporary scholars, while affirming the traditional Jewish view that God operates behind the overt events in *Esther*, he does not recognize that the "*pur*" is *nothing less than the intentional symbol of chance-fate*, which at once conceal, and appear to govern, these very same events. In the words of the megillah, *pur hu hagoral*, i.e., the *pur* is the lot, and it is the symbol of chance-fate. This dual meaning is intended both in the use of the Babylonian "*puru*" (cf. Moore's earlier comments) and the Hebrew *goral*. The latter initially meant "lot" (Lev. 16:8), but later came to denote "fate" as well (e.g., Psalm 16:5).

This interpretation proceeds from the only accurate reading which *Esther* allows, viz., that God acts behind the veil of causality and chance, on behalf of the people of Israel. It is specifically to accentuate this point that the name of God is not mentioned in the megillah, while all the events are "cast" to give the appearance of chance-occurrences, or, *purim*. For the author of *Esther*, this position is at once a statement of history and of everyday reality. In Haman's hands, the *pur* takes on this very meaning. For him, the lots are not just a means of finding a propitious day, through some act of divination, in which to perpetrate his machinations. More than this, *the lottery is Haman's way of expressing to the Jews that he can deal with their fate willy-nilly, by chance alone*. Haman denies both the possibility and the reality of the divine. In this regard, he is inextricably linked to Amalek. The 19th century exegete, Malbim, has brilliantly defined the arch-sin of Amalek, on the basis of an inadequately understood phrase in the Torah.⁷ Amalek, we are told, had attacked Israel immediately after the Exodus (17:8 ff.). Whereas all "the nations heard and trembled" (Exodus 15:14), Amalek, in the words of the Torah, "did not fear God" (Deut. 25:18). What is meant here, Malbim points out, is that Amalek's was an act of defiance, predicated on the denial of God's existence, the assumption that chance alone dominates the universe, and therefore, the certainty that he could carry out his evil designs and bring about the downfall of Israel. Amalek's moral perversity, therefore, derives from his nihilistic theological posture. And so does that of Haman, a thousand years later.

Tradition views Haman as an actual Agagite, a descendant of the

6. *Toldot Haemunah Hayisraelit* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik-Dvir), vol. 8, p. 446.

7. *Hatorah ve-hamizvah*, Deut. 15:17.

Amalekite king, Agag, who was spared by Saul (Sam. I, ch. 15). While this is the probable intention of *Esther*, an alternative explanation is possible. Ibn Ezra, in the 12th century, commenting on *Esther* 2:5, already observed that Kish (" . . . Mordechai, the son of Jair, son of Shimai, son of Kish, a Benjamite . . .) could not refer to Saul's father, since it would then have been necessary to mention Saul as well. The problem, in fact, is more pronounced: if it is intended that Mordechai was descended from Saul, this, above all else, should have been stated. A further difficulty is the reference to only three ancestors, when many others must have lived during the approximately 500 years which separated Kish and Mordechai. All of which was known to, and intended by, the author.

A different explanation may account for these details. Perhaps what is intended is a two-fold *coincidence* (as if, a chance-occurrence) in which Mordechai has a grandfather whose name is the same as Saul's father, and in which both Mordechai and Saul are from the same tribe. That Mordechai is an *ish yimini* is little wonder since, in his time, only two tribes of Israel were left. Thus, Mordechai, who shares certain "coincidental" similarities with Saul, confronts an Agagite (in the figurative, though real sense), as did Saul.

Haman's intentions, and the broader meaning of Purim, go even deeper. They are brought into fuller relief when we consider three dates in the megillah, whose meaning and interrelation have gone unnoticed. We are informed that Haman cast the lots in the first month (3:7), and that he made known the results of the lottery on the 13th day of that month (3:12). Later, we find Purim itself falling on the 14th and 15th days of the last month of the year (9:17, 18). At first glance, there does not appear to be any connection between these dates. However, given our understanding of the *pur*, it can be shown that they are all bound to Passover, to Haman's schemes, and to their eventual fate.

To understand the relationship of these days to Passover, we need to recognize that, in the time of the Temple, if not in our own times, two days stand forth most prominently in the celebration of the holiday. They are the 14th and 15th days of the first month, Nissan.⁸ On the 15th of the month, in the evening, the paschal lamb was eaten and the seder celebrated, to commemorate the exodus which had occurred on that day. On the 14th of the month, the paschal lamb was slaughtered amidst pomp and ceremony in the Temple, all leaven was searched for and destroyed, and the immediate preparation of the holiday was conducted.

In casting the lots in Nissan, and then announcing the results of the lottery on the 13th of the month, Haman sought to demonstrate to

8. Rabbi Y. Levin, *Hamo'adim Bahalakha* (A. Zioni, 1963), p. 215 ff., observes that *Pesah* is used in the Torah to denote both the 14th and 15th of Nissan.

the Jews, *immediately before* their celebration of Passover, his denial of God's providential relationship towards them. When the lots fell on the 13th of Adar, Haman had reason for satisfaction. His intentions seemed, pleasingly by chance, to be affirmed. But, as it turned out, the Jews battled with their adversaries on the 13th and 14th days of this month, and celebrated their victory on the subsequent 14th and 15th days. Purim, preceding Passover by exactly one month, came to parallel and affirm Passover's meaning of Divine providence towards the Jewish people. Perhaps it also intends to convey some larger eschatological meaning, suggesting that a future Passover (the classical paradigm of the final redemption) would be preceded by God's providence bestowed on His people in exile.

Haman's espousal of chance-fate, through which he expresses his rejection of the Jewish belief in providence, discloses, on the one hand, his moral character; one which respects no law, authority, or morality, and does not cringe from even genocidal machinations. But, on the other hand, his belief also expresses a wider view, which we believe is alluded to in *Esther*. This view was probably rooted in popular Zoroastrian religion (as opposed to its formal tenets). Although there is uncertainty as to when Zoroaster himself lived,⁹ the religion he founded was already prominent in the time of Darius (522–486 B.C.E.).¹⁰ After Darius' time, former Persian deities were re-introduced, alongside the Zoroastrian system. Our interpretation places the events of *Esther* at a time when Zoroastrianism was at least the dominant religious system in the Persian Empire.

Whatever positive elements one might find in Zoroastrianism,¹¹ it obviously violated Jewish religious sentiment and belief. Above all, its dualistic postulation of two primeval forces of good and evil, Ahura-Mazda, and Angra-Mazda, compromised the Hebraic concept of God's unity and sovereignty. This dualism must certainly have confronted the common Persian adherent, himself, with a fatalistic position that placed him helplessly between these opposing forces. When things went amiss in life, notwithstanding a belief in the eventual triumph of Ahura-Mazda, the Persian knew that the god of darkness had gained the upper hand. Persian man, confronted with evil—not only in his everyday life, but at

9. Dates proposed range from the 10th to the 5th centuries, B.C.E. Cf. *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Macmillan Co., and The Free Press, 1967), vol. 8, p. 380, and Jack Finegan, *Archaeology of World Religions* (Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 76. It is interesting that Herodotus does not mention Zoroaster (*The Cambridge Ancient History* [Cambridge University Press, 1953], vol. 4, p. 206). The exclusion of so prominent a figure, while the religion he founded is mentioned, could be offered as an argument for the ready exclusion of a limited Persian intrigue which culminated in a brief battle of two days (*Esther*, ch. 9).

10. "... almost all of his inscriptions emphasize his devotion to Ahura-Mazda," Finegan, *Op. cit.*, p. 94. Cf. also *The Cambridge* ... vol. 4, p. 209 ff.)

11. J. Klausner, *Historiah Shel Bayit Sheni* (J. Ahiasaf, 1963), vol. II, pp. 124–5.

the divine level as well—must have developed some fatalistic apprehensiveness. Such a fatalistic notion is the obverse of the coin of chance. It is no coincidence, therefore, that a later branch of Zoroastrianism openly espoused a fatalistic doctrine, which it believed was the substratum of reality.¹² This can only affirm that the roots of such fatalism were inherent in the religion from the outset, and, as such, through its popular image, became known to the Jews of Persia, and the author of *Esther*.

The Jewish perception of Zoroastrian dualism and fatalism is projected in several features of *Esther*, aside from the symbolic *purim*. The carnival air at the beginning of the book may be intended to convey the mode of life which issues from such a doctrine. Dualism is echoed in several aspects of the account: One is the dichotomy between the two nemeses of Israel, the cunning and calculating Haman, and the fickle and mercurial Ahasuerus, who was, for some time, a nemesis as well. But, more than anything, the proclamation of two mutually exclusive ordinances by Ahasuerus, which could not be rescinded (8:8), suggests that the author would have us see the schismatic, dualistic religious substratum from which Haman's thought emerged. This does not mean, however, that Haman believed in that system. He seems more the sceptic who accepts the notion of chance-fatalism, while rejecting, or being indifferent to, the system that developed around it. But it is enough for the Bible to criticize the inherent chance conception of the Zoroastrian system, which indirectly gave rise to a Haman and his designs.

If one appreciates the underlying polemical character of the megillah protesting, as it does, a fatalistic chance view of reality, important implications emerge for both the historical and literary study of *Esther*. The widely held view that Purim represents a late Jewish rationalization for a Persian holiday which the Jews were already practicing, must be an oversimplification. Even if there are elements of some such holiday in *Esther*, their assimilation to the Purim account could hardly have occurred in so simple a fashion as is proposed. Aside from the fact that this particular Persian holiday is yet to be discovered, some objections arise. The megillah seems to speak of clear historical reality when it informs us of Haman's argument to Ahasuerus: "there is a certain people scattered and dispersed . . . and their laws are diverse from those of every people . . ." (3:8). Jewish exclusiveness, during the Persian period, is strongly supported by this statement. How, therefore, could the Jews simply adopt a Persian holiday when their commitment to their own faith and holiday calendar was so firmly established?¹³ More specifically, how could another new holiday be fitted into the Jewish scheme, particu-

12. "The Zervanites placed Zervan Akarna 'Unlimited Time' at the beginning of things. Others presented Bakht 'Fate' as the ruler of everything." *Enc. of Religion & Ethics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clarke, 1958), vol. XII, p. 864.

13. A similar point is made by Klausner, *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 15.

larly one rooted in an opposing religious system? The exponents of such views might argue that *Esther* attempts to rationalize just such an embarrassing development; however, a heavy burden of proof lies with their position, which lacks clear supporting evidence in its behalf, and violates the view, maintained by *Esther*, of Jewish exclusiveness during Persian times.

There is an alternative explanation of Purim. The episode which *Esther* commemorates was not assimilated to the Jewish observance of a Persian purim; rather, elements of Zoroastrian religion were assimilated to the Jewish event of Purim. Haman's scheme against the Jews was nourished by underlying Zoroastrian thought, which he held up against the Jewish concept of Divine unity and sovereignty. Furthermore, Haman's own actions may have borrowed from existing Persian custom so as to appear more palatable to Ahasuerus, and they may have been timed with the celebration of a particular Persian holiday, which was largely concerned with fate. When Ahasuerus asks Haman "what shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor" (6:6), Haman's response, that the man be led through the streets on the king's horse, and wearing his apparel and crown (6:8, 9), may have impressed the king as traditionally acceptable, if Gaster is correct that such a practice was part of a general holiday celebration. Of course, for Haman, the purpose was entirely different—to set a stage for usurping the throne.

It is significant that, in distinction to those who detect an indigenous Persian holiday in *Esther*, Purim—as described in the book—has an entirely sober, though joyful, character. Its main religious activity is the reading of the megillah itself (so the traditional understanding of 9:27, 28). Additionally, a meal, the exchange of gifts¹⁴ (sustaining the sense of comradeship, which the common peril had aroused), and charity are prescribed (9:22). Where is all the frivolity of the Persian festivity? The parade of the commoner dressed as king? Some frivolity could not but develop on this day, given the character of the megillah, but it appears to have been a secondary development and of Jewish origin.

Understanding the polemic of *Esther*, its style needs no recourse to borrowing or recasting.¹⁵ The light, almost oriental, air of *Esther* is not the sign of some alien influence which it cannot conceal. It is, rather, the air of a world-view which *Esther* masterfully portrays, while rejecting it in toto. *Esther* describes this world in order to *parody* it. It portrays a

14. The popularity of this practice, within a strict Jewish context, even if found elsewhere, is attested to by Nehemiah 8:10, 12.

15. Scholars recognize the stylistic similarities between parts of *Esther*, and the accounts of Joseph in Genesis, but they err in inferring that all that is sought is dramatic description. What is primarily intended is that we link Esther and Mordechai with Joseph. The latter was the first Jew to rise close to an alien throne, yet to sustain his faith, and act on behalf of his people. The megillah would have us see this very analogy.

course of causality, only to *invert* it. Haman rests his hopes on chance, but providence prevails. Wherever he turns, his plans turn against him and to the favor of the Jews. Eventually, the day he plans for the destruction of the Jews becomes their day of rejoicing. In the very words of the megillah, "In the twelfth month . . . on the day in which the enemies of the Jews hoped to gain rule over them, it was turned to the contrary (*nahafokh*) . . ." (9:1; also, cf. 9:22). The very name of the holiday, Purim, indicates the centrality of this inversion and, so, is entirely understandable to us. Purim which, to the nemesis of the Jew and to an alien system of thought, affirmed the operation of chance and fate in the universe, becomes, for the Jew, the anti-chance symbol, the symbol of that which God so readily controls to *His* ends. Indeed, in naming the holiday Purim, the full significance of the holiday is disclosed to us. *Purim is the appellation of a problem*; a problem both ancient and vitally contemporary. Do chance and determinism rule supreme in the universe, or does God? Purim acknowledges Judaism's awareness of the problem, and offers its Biblical response.

The problem was once less pressing. Throughout Biblical times, God's face was not "hidden." Prophecy linked God and Israel, bringing His word directly to the people of Israel, and asserting His Presence. But Biblical history, the history of God's word and act, drew to a close. One step before the gates of this epoch were closed the event of Purim occurred. It occurred in the *galut*, the exile, which had only recently become a living dimension of Jewish history. If we interpret correctly, before the final word of God was entrusted to man, it was made clear that in post-Biblical times, a time lived in *galut*, where the presence of God was not overt, His word not direct, and His face not revealed, still, behind the veil of *purim*, God's providence towards His people, would uphold them against adversary and ideological force alike, as in Passover of old.

Exodus From Eden: One Woman's Experience

NAOMI BLUESTONE

I HAVE BEEN WHAT YOU WOULD CALL A "NICE Jewish girl." I was born, bred and nurtured that way, happily at home with 3000 years of Jewish history even as a preverbal toddler. Our home was kosher, all holidays were observed, and a strong sense of identity shielded us from the mild anti-Semitism which occasionally flared around us. Both my parents were professionals working in the field of Jewish education and welfare, my mother as a Hebrew teacher, my father as a Jewish communal worker. I had a Conservative Hebrew School education, amplified by private studies with an eminent Hebrew scholar, and attended Hebrew-speaking camps.

My own brand of Judaism began to crystalize at the age of eleven, when the State of Israel was declared, and I joined the Labor Zionist Youth Movement (*Habonim*), an affiliation I still cherish. Quite unlike my parents' own more traditional Zionist leaning, the movement was one of the molding forces of my adolescence, for many years the most important focus in my life.

I worked in high school as a Sunday School teacher (Reform), and later earned my way through much of college by this means. I maintained my identity, including *kashrut*, through college, graduate school and medical school, despite great hardship and, surprisingly, despite membership in the liberal, intellectual segment of the predominantly non-Jewish campus community. It was clearly a double life. I have always been an intellectual sort of person, liberal politically and socially; and for a number of years people were surprised, even shocked, to discover that I took Judaism seriously, and practiced it. Although my friends were not restricted to Jews, I made efforts to seek them out, even organizing a social group for Jewish students in graduate school where none existed, despite a student enrollment of over 25,000.

At the age of twenty-three, while a medical student, I made my first trip to Israel, working, speaking the language, exploring the country, and making friendships which have endured. This visit, which had been so long deferred, was a deeply satisfying experience, and only the need to continue my education propelled me back to the United States.

The present writing finds me a very busy person, a public health physician, a single woman, living and practicing in New York City for

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the multiplex reasons that all people like me come to New York. It also finds me sadly aware that my Jewish traditionalism is, to a great extent, a thing of the past, having long ceased to be a dynamic force in my life. I no longer find it imperative to search for a Jewish husband, nor would I want to give my children the kind of Jewish education I had.

This awareness, though long in developing, broke through suddenly. A few months ago, while staring at the Late, Late Show long after it had flickered off, I realized that religion, if it works, is good for many things: spiritual sustenance, a feeling of community, a sense of history and self-pride, shared customs and ceremonies giving an aura of stability and continuity to life, etc. And I appraised just what Judaism and I had given to each other. It appeared that the pursuit of my own personal development away from traditional roles had cost me my place in the fellowship. I realized that *there is virtually no place in my Judaism for an unmarried woman over twenty-five*.

Superficially, over the next few months, this direct confrontation made no difference in my life. I still gave liberally to all the formal Jewish philanthropies (and, in good Jewish tradition, to many others as well). I have not removed the Mezuzah from the door, and the Hebrew and Jewish books rest undisturbed with the others on my shelves. The photograph of Bialik still hangs, and the Persian drawings of Moses and the bulrushes. Even the kosher kitchen has not been officially dismantled, although it has gotten messed up a bit since I started importing chicken sandwiches from the non-kosher deli.

But there was no denying what I had discovered. The realization that unless you fit into the mold, unless you have a family to feed *rozhinkes mit mandlen*, unless you have children to send to Hebrew school, unless you have a husband to escort you to the annual dinner-dance, unless you have time for society meetings, unless you have appetite for sisterhood luncheons, unless you do all that your mother did, and her mother before her . . . Judaism offers nothing. For Judaism is fixated in a world of forty years ago. I'm younger than that and my whole life has been passing by.

But now let's consider the experiences which led to the revelations of the post-Late-Late Show. We'll start with the Synagogue. When I came to this city a few years ago, I went straightaway to the Synagogue, finding a beautiful Conservative temple not far away which boasted to be one of the oldest in the city. The congregation consisted of about 25 aged men (not unlike a pathetic congregation I saw several years ago in Riga), who assured me that the new young Rabbi was soon to be building a congregation from the young couples moving into the restored neighborhood. I promptly sent in a check for membership and received a rather puzzled letter in return. I was, apparently, the first woman in one hundred odd years to request membership for herself, and what were

they to do with me? They decided to let me join, but they withheld voting and Board membership rights. I accepted, and never challenged it, with a passivity which seems shocking now in the light of Women's Lib.

However, it soon became evident that, despite a friendly environment I was a fish out of water. Between the old men *davening* in one corner, and the Purim *groggers* in the other, I felt caught between two worlds. The Synagogue's adult education classes conflicted with my professional responsibilities and didn't interest me particularly, anyway. It seemed inappropriate for me to have a turn at making an *Oneg Shabbat*. I had no little anniversaries or remembrances in my family to contribute to the Newsletter. I had no children for the nursery school, and no sisters for the Sisterhood. Heaven knows, the Synagogue was no place to go to meet eligible men. As a matter of fact, I felt self-conscious; a woman walking alone to Holiday services is the rough equivalent of a woman going alone to a Broadway opening. Not a widow, and not a schoolgirl, after several years I just gave up. Although Jews are not supposed to pray alone. I read my (autographed) *Mahzor* in my living room.

As the synagogue receded in my life, so did customs and ceremonies. I stopped going home for any of the holidays except Pesah, because after the age of thirty it becomes uncomfortable, embarrassing, and inconvenient. Just as the holidays were no longer observed, the Sabbath passed away. I felt foolish and awkward lighting candles; it seemed a childish attempt to recapture happy memories of a long dead past. Did I learn to cook Jewish? For whom? Does a woman make chicken soup for one, and freeze the rest? *Latkes*? *Dreidels*? *Esrog*? These are the toys of childhood, resurrected for each generation only when the generations continue, otherwise of no value!

Kashrut? Is the Jewish community aware of what happens to a kosher girl when a man asks her out on their first dinner date? I am an expert at lies: I *like* fish, I *adore* dry cheese sandwiches, I prefer tuna on rye to a steak *any* day! I am also an expert at telling the truth with a firm voice and a clear eye . . . and picking up the inevitable, usually un verbalized response: "Oy, I had to pick a religious nut." After thirty years of trying to convince men that "Yes, I am kosher but, no, I'm not a fanatic," I bit into my first deli hamburger, medium rare. It was delicious. The ghosts of all those rejected frankfurters at all those high school football games didn't even rise up to haunt me. Best hamburger I ever had. I eat a lot of them now; they console me for the loss of my illusions.

The question of *kashrut* raises the issue of traditionalism in general. I learned a long time ago that I *had* to go out on Friday nights, I *had* to cook, shop and clean on Saturday . . . because I had no other time to perform these necessary functions. I am a professional woman, not a housewife, and, therefore, not an observant Jew, by choice. This concession to

reality has never upset me, and does not constitute a valid argument concerning the value of Judaism to the modern woman.

The discrepancy between the much-loved customs of Judaism, and the ways of the outside world did, for a time, propel me towards Jews with whom I might be able to "make it," observant Jews. On the Upper West Side of New York I found some *yarmulked* but wholly unsavory types, from whom I was soon pleased to flee, back to the more assimilated Jews with whom, I confess, I felt more comfortable. It is an interesting dilemma, to be caught between intellectual companions who know nothing of Judaism, and intolerant Jews who know ritual . . . but little else. I opted for the former; it was a purely personal decision. And it pushed me one step further away from Judaism.

Where, then, might I find some other Jews, perhaps affiliate with Jewish organizations, to remind me that I am still a Jew? The Synagogue is gone, the ceremonials of the home are memories, the holidays are not observed. Jewish dating is problematic; what then? Well, my name is on the lists, that's one thing. The Israel Bond people know me well. Once a year, three very nice gentlemen from the U.J.A. call me up, each in turn, to request that I send my check to *his* particular affiliation for credit. (I give to whoever calls first.) Then, I'm on the mailing lists for all the dinners honoring rich, older, generous men, whom I have never met. I don't mind the \$25.00 covert; my trouble is finding someone crazy enough to go even to please me (which it doesn't). But I mention this Jewish contact for completeness' sake. It sort of makes me feel like I'm my father; *he* gets invitations like that.

Other affiliations? I am most sympathetic to the problems of young Jewish students on the campuses, what with the anti-Zionist focus of the radical new left, but I don't know many students, nor do I have access to them. I am similarly concerned with the plight of Russian Jewry, but don't really know the best way to help.

I would like to attend lectures, as keen as the competition is for my time. I have long been meaning to try the Educational Alliance. I have attended the very interesting-sounding lectures at the Herzl Institute and, on the last occasion, found both speaker and moderator to be so rude, biased, and narrow-minded, I am now permanently "turned off."

Well, then, what of the women's organizations? Would you believe that I am the only Jewish woman in America never tapped by Hadassah? Incredible, but true. I don't know whether to laugh or cry. But I have never had my Jewish social vacuum penetrated by the good ladies of Hadassah. Have they discerned already that we apparently have very little in common? I think they are losing a good bet, myself. After all, I enjoy the kind of income which permits me to buy raffle books without consulting my husband first, and as to donating a cake, I could even afford to send one over from Rumplemeyer's (Or wouldn't that be kosher?).

At any rate, I read my mother's copies of the Hadassah Newsletter, which I genuinely enjoy. After all, if I requested my *own* subscription, they might *find* me! I am, by the way, as unknown to ORT, Mizrahi, Farband, etc. as I am to Hadassah. Where do they get their membership lists . . . from the bridal columns?

I *do* belong to the "Alumni" group of my Zionist days. I cannot accuse them of re-hashing the glorious past, or of being sentimental. They are truly, intelligently activist in Jewish causes, in America and Israel, and I support them, and even join them occasionally. *Very* occasionally. They are, inevitably, wrapped up in their children. I don't blame them; but I can't join them.

As I look back over my increasing isolation from all nostalgic remembrances of Judaism, or any modern replacements, it seems pointless to search for any one cause. It is also a moot point whether I have been abandoning the cultural and religious foci of Judaism . . . or whether they have abandoned me. One must still come to grips with the central premise of the religion: Do I believe, nevertheless, in God? Alas, readers, I no longer do.

Several years ago I was fated (or should I say privileged?) to have an opportunity to have my faith tested. Caught in a vortex of prolonged illness and depression, brought quite literally to my knees, *min ha-mezar*, as it were, I cried out . . . and got no answer. I am still trying to deal with that silence. I shall not dwell on it. Man's loss of faith has been dealt with sufficiently by others more eloquent. I would simply say: in my experience, Jewish religious education is incompatible with the needs of the adult individual. The God of children still prevails, apparently.

I can in no way fault the ethical and moral precepts of Judaism. I just rather suspect that Judaism does not corner the world's market on righteousness, and I suppose that's what some of the other modern (and competitive) new religious forms are all about. I feel no particular need to investigate them. I would not be surprised, however, if Jewish teenagers did. Judaism has been short-changing them, too.

Judaism needs an overhaul from the bottom up. I offer myself as evidence. If I can defect . . . anyone can.

The Dybbuk Had Three Wives: Isaac Bashevis Singer and the Jewish Sense of Time

STANLEY SCHATT

Enemies, A Love Story,¹ is ISAAC BASHEVIS Singer's eighth and latest novel. It is not only the story of Herman Broder's simultaneous love affair with his two wives and his mistress, but, also, one more attempt to grapple with a very serious problem for the Jew that Spinoza posed centuries ago. What precisely is the Jew's relationship to historical time and to the supernatural? Until *Enemies, A Love Story*, Singer has concentrated on pinpointing the historical significance of Polish Jewry in his novels with urban settings, while restricting his treatment of demons, imps, and dybbuks exclusively to his short stories and novels that have *shtetl* settings. His synthesis of these two divergent streams of thought in his newest novel is evidence that Singer has finally resolved Spinoza's problem, at least to his own satisfaction.

Born in the town of Radzymin, near Warsaw, in 1904, Singer, in his early days, was like other Jews in Polish *shtetlakh*. Living in his father's rabbinical court in Warsaw, Isaac did not have the opportunity to read a secular book until he was twelve. From the age of three he studied the Talmud, in a *heder*, with other male Jewish children from eight in the morning until eight at night.

His novels depict the social, political, and religious changes in Poland from 1863 to 1930, with particular emphasis on the Jews' difficult choice during this period between assimilation and annihilation. In Singer's eyes, the story of the Jew in Poland is the age-old struggle between progress and faith. The apocalyptic Nazi years that destroyed the world which Singer had always known is not proof to him that God has abandoned his Chosen People, but evidence of Jewry's loss of faith. Recently, in *Intellectual Digest*, Singer wrote that his credo is that the true artist

knows that we are a fragment in God's unending book, a moment in eternity. Our hopes are closely connected with all the stars, all the galaxies of the cosmos. If the universe makes sense, so do we. This is the message both of religion and of art.²

1. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1972. All subsequent references to this novel will be to this edition and will be included in the main body of this essay.

2. "Credo," *Intellectual Digest* 3 (October 1972), 40.

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In the Author's Note to *The Manor*, the first volume, chronologically, of his trilogy,³ Singer indicates he will cover

the epoch between the Polish insurrection of 1863 and the end of the nineteenth century. It was the era of gas lamps, the time when the Poles had finally become resigned to their loss of independence and turned to a kind of national positivism. Poland now began to emerge as an industrial country, railroads were built, factories were opened, and the cities grew rapidly. The Jews, who until 1863 for the most part lived in a ghetto atmosphere, now began to play an important role in Polish industry, commerce, arts and sciences. All the spiritual and intellectual ideas that triumphed in the modern era had their roots in the world of that time—socialism and nationalism, Zionism and assimilation, nihilism and anarchism, suffragettism, atheism, the weakening of the family bond, free love, and even the beginnings of fascism.

Singer describes the peasants' treatment of their former masters. The novel opens with Count Jampolski being dragged through Jampol, the town named after him, by the Czar's soldiers. Calman Jacoby, a Jew, assumes management of the Count's lands. While the Russians eliminated the Polish entry tolls for the Jews and allowed them to live where they wished, the Jew still was faced with the peasants' hatred of "Christ-killers." Singer pictures the peasants' resentment toward Jacoby,

an infidel who lorded over the Polish soil in the name of an alien oppressor. But at least he did not put on airs. Poland had fought and lost once again. Her finest sons were now being driven into dismal icy tundras where the survivors of the 1831 revolt still languished (p. 5).

The Polish Jews at this time were perhaps the most backward, the least assimilated of European Jewry. A good deal of Polish peasant resentment is based upon the Jews' strange appearance and rituals. Although many Jewish families could trace their Polish residence back six hundred years, few Jews spoke Polish. In both *The Manor* and its sequel, *The Estate*, Singer uses Calman Jacoby's grandson, Ezriel, as a symbol of the younger Jews' desire for assimilation mixed with the vague feeling that God did not wish it. When Ezriel goes to Lublin to be among Hasidic pilgrims, Singer writes that

the aimlessness of Ezriel's tour reflected his unrest and impatience. What's wrong with me? he thought. Why do I feel a stranger here? Were people really so blind to the obvious inconsistencies of their faith. God was the Master of the World, and in that world the poor were starving. Although He was presumed to be merciful, He allowed the strong to overcome the weak . . . (*The Manor*, p. 57).

Singer ends *The Manor* with Ezriel's unhappiness over his inability to assimilate:

3. All subsequent references to Singer's trilogy will be to the following editions: *The Family Moskat* (New York: Noonday Press, 1950, 1966). *The Manor* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1967). *The Estate* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1969).

Each time he attended a party, he envied those young men who since childhood had spoken the Gentile tongue, worn modern clothes, and mixed freely with girls. . . . Ezriel could not get used to this way of life. The cheder and Talmud had made him unworldly (p. 393).

In *The Estate*, Ezriel marries and has a son. His financial obligation to his grandfather forces him to have his son circumcized. He "was ashamed to have his Gentile neighbors see his father in his rabbinical fur hat . . ." (pp. 21-22).

In *The Family Moskat*, Singer covers the period from the end of the nineteenth century up to the Nazi occupation of Poland. Since Singer believes very sincerely that when a Jew assimilates he loses his purpose in life and becomes nothing, Asa Hershel, the novel's protagonist, moves from the serenity and religious unworldliness of the *shtetl* of Tereshpol Minor to the atheism and chaos of Warsaw. The most important thing for Asa is knowledge; a Jewish Faust, he spends most of his time learning Polish and scientific subjects so that he can go to college. Living and studying in Warsaw, he is unaware of what has happened to his family in Tereshpol Minor:

A few days after the war broke out, the Tereshpol Minor town crier read aloud in the market square an order that all Jews were to leave the town within twenty-four hours. Immediately pandemonium set in. . . . Those who had horses and wagons immediately began to pack their belongings together. . . . The Poles who lived in the town acted as though what was going on was none of their affair. . . . The Jewish housewives ran to their gentile neighbors to wail and sob, but the gentiles were too busy to listen to them. They were occupied with sifting flour, putting up preserves, churning butter, making cheese. The older women sat spinning flax, while the children played with dogs and cats or dug in the ground for worms. They could get along very well without the Jews (p. 257).

His girl friend wonders what tortures Asa, and comes to the conclusion that "he was not a worldly man by his very essence. He had forsaken God, and because of this he was dead—a living body with a dead soul" (p. 582).

II

While realistically describing Poland's century of turmoil, from a Jewish point of view, in his longer fiction, Singer's shorter fiction is a reflection of the power of the Cabala and the occult in the thousands of Polish *shtetlakh*. He remembers, as a child in his home,

there was always talk about spirits of the dead that possess the bodies of the living, souls reincarnated as animals, houses inhabited by hobgoblins, cellars haunted by demons. My father spoke of these things, first of all because he was interested in them, and second because in a big city children so easily go astray. They go everywhere, see everything, read profane books. It is necessary to remind them from time to time that there are still mysterious forces at work in the world.⁴

4. Isaac Bashevis Singer, *In My Father's Court* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966), p. 11.

For Singer, his demonology serves philosophical, psychological, and artistic functions.

Singer has indicated that "I still live with this idea that we are surrounded by all kinds of powers and I've been brought up with it and still cling to it . . . If you are afraid of something, the very fact that you are afraid means that you have admitted that it exists. . . ." ⁵ He admits that he finds it easy to believe in "reincarnation, possession of devils, and other such things." ⁶ His demons are, in part, a product of Jewish folklore in which evil manifests itself in Man so that he "takes semblance for substance, and tries to get away from the divine primal source instead of striving after . . . it." ⁷ But Singer's fiction does not present a clear dichotomy between good and evil, appearance and reality. "Gimpel the Fool" ends with the declaration,

No doubt the world is entirely an imaginary world, but it is only once removed from the true world. . . . The grave waits and worms are hungry; the shrouds are prepared. . . . Another *schnorrer* is waiting to inherit my bed of straw. When the time comes I will go joyfully. Whatever may be there, it will be real, without complication, without ridicule, without deception, God be praised: there even Gimpel cannot be deceived. ⁸

Gimpel suggests that the true world is a world of "milk and honey," but considering his inability to distinguish appearance from reality there is no reason to think he is correct. Singer, himself, has indicated that

I am possessed by my demons and they add a lot to my vision and my expression. Another world exists beyond ours, a world not so much different from this one as its extension, projection, or mirror image. ⁹

According to Singer, man is as much a fool as Gimpel if he thinks that the existence of such spirits and such a world can be proved or disproved since "we don't know really what reality is, whatever we are obsessed with becomes reality." ¹⁰ Thus, the universe appears to be pluralistic, complex enough so that man cannot clearly discern a pattern; it is only the "fool" who even expects to see such a clear delineation between good and evil.

For Singer, much like for Malamud's Morris Bober in *The Assistant*, to be a good Jew is to be a good man and to follow Talmudic law. After all, man does have an innate sense of what is good and what is evil, and

5. Harold Flender, "Isaac Bashevis Singer," *Paris Review* 11 (Fall 1968), 67.

6. Joel Blocker and Richard Elman, "An Interview with Isaac Bashevis Singer," *Commentary* 36 (November 1963), 370.

7. Isadore Singer, ed., *The Jewish Encyclopedia* III (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1967), p. 477.

8. Isaac Bashevis Singer, *Gimpel the Fool and Other Stories* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1957), p. 21.

9. Ben Siegel, *Isaac Bashevis Singer* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), p. 17.

10. C. N. Pondrom, "Isaac Bashevis Singer: An Interview and Biographical Sketch," *Con L* 10 (Winter-Summer 1969), 6.

the world is a moral gymnasium in which he must exercise his free will. Singer has said that

I believe, at least consciously, in free will. Everyone of us has free will. . . . I always believe that there is no power which can curb a man from using this rare gift if he really wants to. Even though you will see in my works many stories where I make man seem like a victim of other powers, I don't believe in that. . . . This war between God and Satan means actually the war between free will and compulsion. From the moment man is born, he is compelled, yet at the same time he is given free will to fight compulsion.¹¹

And, so, while Singer believes in the supernatural and the possibility of a world beyond the senses, he uses the supernatural in his fiction because it also serves as a sort of "spiritual stenography."¹² The demon or dybbuk often is pictured in literature as a symbol of the *Id*,¹³ and it quite obviously serves that function in many of Singer's stories. In "The Black Wedding," a Hasidic rabbi spends his life reading the Cabala and passing on his mysticism to Hindele, his daughter, who begins to imagine the world to be populated by demons and devils. She "often suffered attacks of yawning . . . her throat ached, there was a buzzing in her ears. At such times incantations had to be made to drive away the evil eye."¹⁴ Hindele's physical description indicates her mental imbalance. She

was known to be sick, to keep too many fast days and to fall into a swoon when things did not go her way. Nor was she attractive. She was short, frail, had a large head. . . . Her hair was bushy. There was an insane look in her black eyes (p. 28).

Upon her father's death, she is betrothed to a young rabbi so that the two Hasidic congregations can be joined together. Yet she cannot rid herself of her fanatical devotion to her father's belief in demons. Perhaps she is frightened about marrying a stranger, for when she first sees him she knows "what she had suspected long before—that her bridegroom was a demon and that the wedding was nothing but black magic, a satanic hoax" (p. 30). She knows "from reading holy books, that demons sometimes married human virgins whom they later carried away behind the black mountains . . ." (p. 31). On her wedding day she is carried by two female attendants to her bedroom after the marriage ceremony so that her marriage can be consummated. But

while these females whispered to her duties of a bride, they spat in her ear. Then she was thrown upon a heap of mud which was supposed to

11. Marshall Bregar and Bob Barnhart, "A Conversation with Isaac Bashevis Singer," in Irving Malin, ed., *Critical Views of Isaac Bashevis Singer* (New York: New York University Press, 1969), p. 40.

12. Joel Blocker and Richard Elman, "An Interview with Isaac Bashevis Singer," 371.

13. See Andrien Van Kaam and Kathleen Healy, *The Demon and the Dove: Personality Growth Through Literature* (Louvain: Duquesne University Press, n. d.), p. 45.

14. Isaac Bashevis Singer, "The Black Wedding," in *Gimpel the Fool and Other Stories* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1957), p. 27.

be linen. For a while Hindele lay in that cave, surrounded by darkness, poison, weeds and lice. . . . Then the devil to whom she was espoused entered. . . . She wanted to scream for help (p. 33).

She is impregnated on her wedding night, and nine months later she goes through childbirth. Convinced that if she cries out the devils will have her forever, Hindele restrains herself until the pain becomes unbearable. Suddenly she screams and dies. "In Tzvikey and in the neighborhood the tidings spread that Hindele had given birth to a male child by Reb Simon of Yampol. The mother died in childbirth" (p. 35). The reader realizes, however, that she literally scared herself to death.¹⁵

Perhaps scaring oneself to death is preferable, though, to the fate of Henne Fire, another Singer protagonist, whom one villager describes as

not a human being but a fire from Gehenna. I know one should not speak evil of the dead and she suffered greatly for her sins, was it her fault that there was always a blaze within her? One could see it in her eyes: two coals.¹⁶

Henne is an angry, high-strung, overly sensitive young woman. A sixteenth century physician would explain her malady by labeling her choleric. The story ends with Henne mysteriously burned to a crisp even though nobody has seen a fire, and her possessions, somehow, are left untouched. It is clear that Singer here is using his "spiritual stenography" to draw the portrait of a choleric lady, almost the stereotyped Jewish fishwife. In fact, because people are afraid to have her stay in their homes, Henne is reduced, at one point, to selling fish in the market place. She is, no doubt, one of Singer's favorite creations, since he has said

I love to write about hysteric people. I think that all my heroes are possessed people—possessed by a mania, by a fixed idea, by a strange fear or passion. . . . I believe that real writing . . . is at its best when it describes passion.¹⁷

While Singer's demonology quite clearly indicates his philosophical stance and his concern with the psychology of human obsession, it also functions in a third and quite significant way. In a number of stories there is a synthesis of what Orrin Klapp calls the "clever hero"¹⁸ and the archetypal Jewish little man. In "The Last Demon," Singer presents a

15. Some critics read this story literally and ignore the psychological implications. See Ben Siegel, "Sacred and Profane: Isaac Bashevis Singer's Embattled Spirits," *Critique* 6 (Spring 1963), 42. Stanley Edgar Hyman, "The Yiddish Hawthorne," in Richard Kostelanetz, ed., *On Contemporary Literature* (New York: Avon, 1964), p. 587, sees the devil as "obviously a metaphor for a repressed sexuality, and Singer uses his mythology as a psychopathology with the insight of Euripides."

16. Isaac Bashevis Singer, "Henne Fire," in *The Seance and Other Stories* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1968), p. 135.

17. Sanford Pinsker, "Isaac Bashevis Singer: An Interview," *Critique* 11 (1969), 22.

18. Orrin E. Klapp, "The Clever Hero," *Journal of American Folklore* 67 (January-March 1954), 21-34.

story told through the point of view of the last Jewish demon in a small Polish village. He reveals, at one point

I don't have to tell you that I am a Jew. What else, a Gentile? I've heard that there are Gentile demons, but I don't know any, nor do I wish to know them. Jacob and Esau don't become in-laws.¹⁹

In many respects he is a traditional clever hero. He is small, diminutive enough to fit on a page of a Yiddish storybook, and the fact that he is also quite humorous is significant, since Klapp suggests that humor "will redeem many a personal defect—such as ugliness or wickedness."²⁰ But, certainly, this is not the case in Singer's story, since the demon is matched against a young rabbi who, he is informed by a fellow demon, is

not yet thirty, but he's absolutely stuffed with knowledge, knows the thirty-six tractates of the Talmud by heart. He's the greatest Cabalist in Poland, fasts every Monday and Thursday, and bathes in the ritual bath when the water is ice cold. He won't permit any of us to talk to him. What's more, he has a handsome wife, and that's bread in the basket. What do we have to tempt him with? You might as well try to break through an iron wall. (p. 122).

Klapp's other criteria also fail to define adequately this demon who, although he is quite clever, is certainly not "a champion of the little man and righter of wrongs, a protagonist of democracy, and agent of cosmic justice."²¹ Singer's story also fails to fit Klapp's conclusion that

sympathy is maintained for the trickster, however, by the ratio of forces or the villainous character of the persecutor, so that, however questionable the means his hero uses, his opponent seems worse.²²

It is true that the rabbi seems impregnable, too perfect, but certainly a predominantly Jewish audience would not root for the eternal damnation of this young rabbi. Or would they? Somehow, readers still empathize with the demon. Is Singer, like Milton, of the Devil's party? Irvin Malin believes that

Singer himself is convinced that men are demons; that somehow life is "cursed." And he holds this belief so passionately, if unconsciously, that the power of witches, evil spirits, and imps attracts him. He makes their daily business come alive as they defeat weak humanity.²³

The problem with such an interpretation is that "The Last Demon" is only a part of *Short Friday*, and the title story in this collection is a hymn to man's goodness, a tribute to a pious, poor Jewish couple who go directly to Heaven when they die. What Malin overlooks is that even

19. Isaac Bashevis Singer, "The Last Demon," in *Short Friday* (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1963), p. 120.

20. Orrin E. Klapp, *Op. cit.*, 22.

21. *Ibid.*, 30.

22. *Ibid.*, 26.

23. Irving Malin, ed., *Critical Views of Isaac Bashevis Singer* (New York: New York University Press, 1969), p. xix.

though the demon tries to entrap the rabbi, it is the demon who is virtually helpless. What Singer has done is to depict a demon who has all the characteristics of the traditional Jewish little man who is as helpless against pogroms as modern man is against bureaucracy. The demon goes to Tishevitz, a "God-forsaken village," not because he wants to go, but because his boss, Asmodeus, orders him there. He cannot leave until Asmodeus or one of his henchmen gives him a permit. The demon admits

I have enemies among my colleagues and I must beware of intrigue. Perhaps I was sent here just to break my neck. When devils stop warring with people, they start tripping each other (p. 125).

Singer uses this demon to focus attention on those vices that every Jew must curb if he is to use his free will wisely. After all, every demon knows that there are three snares that "work unfailingly—lust, pride, and avarice" (p. 126). The demon fails when the rabbi asks to see his feet, for he admits that "From the smallest imp up to Ketav Meriri we all have the claws of geese" (p. 129). In sorrow, the demon relates how

In one second all my stratagems turn to ashes. An order comes from Asmodeus himself "stay in Tishevitz and fry. Don't go further than a man is allowed to walk on the Sabbath" (p. 129).

When the Nazis come to the village and destroy the Jewish population, the demon is left there alone, like the Jew, "a refugee" (p. 129).

III

Isaac Bashevis Singer is also a refugee, and it is no mere coincidence that *Enemies, A Love Story* is concerned exclusively with refugees. In his first novel without a Polish setting, he creates a menagerie of characters without faith, each cut off from his *shtetl* roots and his cultural history. Herman Broder, the novel's protagonist, decides that

Religions lied. Philosophy was bankrupt from the beginning. The idle promises of progress were no more than a spit in the face of the martyrs of all generations. If time is just a form of perception, or a category of reason, the past is as present as today: Cain continues to murder Abel. Nebuchadnezzar is still slaughtering the sons of Zedekiah and putting out Zedekiah's eyes. The pogrom in Kisheniev never ceases. Jews are forever being burned in Auschwitz (p. 30).

While Singer's belief in a linear movement of historical time is reflected in his historical trilogy, a chronological treatment of the Jew in Poland during the nineteenth century, he also believes that there are several different modes of perception.

In his short story "The Mirror," Singer has an imp explain that

In the vale of shadow which is known as the world, everything is subject to change. But for us time stands still. Adam remains naked, Eve lustful, still in the act of being seduced by the serpent. Cain kills Abel, the flea

still lies with the elephant. . . . Job scratches at his sore-covered body. He will keep scratching until the end of time, but he will find no comfort.²⁴

The occult world and the past both exist for Singer in stasis. Herman Broder thinks about his boyhood in *Enemies*, *A Love Story* and concludes

The past existed! Herman spoke to himself. Granted that time is nothing more than a mode of thinking, as maintained by Spinoza, or a form of perception as Kant thought, still the fact cannot be denied that in Tzvikey in wintertime the stove was heated with firewood; his father, blessed be his memory, studied the Gemara and its commentaries, while his mother cooked a barley stew of pearl kasha, beans, potatoes, and dried mushrooms (p. 175).

For Singer, the supernatural and the historical exist simultaneously, each part of God's grand design. With faith, a Jew is able to restrain his libidinal desires and to live within society safe from the demons and imps that Singer sees as both literal and psychological manifestations. For Singer, a man who assimilates and loses his Jewish faith also loses his link with historical time and, thus, drops out of history. He becomes a demon philosophically, psychologically, and artistically. It is not surprising that Herman Broder disappears as Singer's novel concludes; he belongs in the static world of dybbuks and demons and not in the fluid world of New York City.

24. *Gimpel the Fool and Other Stories* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1957), p. 85.

The Fullness of Liturgical Development

Jewish Worship. By ABRAHAM MILLGRAM. Jewish Publication Society. Philadelphia, Pa., 1971. 673 pp. + xxiii. \$8.50.

Reviewed by LAWRENCE A. HOFFMAN

UNTIL NOW, the few English works on the subject of Jewish liturgy have usually been too uninformed to be considered seriously, or too technical for the average layman to consider at all. And, with a few notable exceptions, usually on specialized topics, both categories have generally shared the fault of being very dull. Finally, however, a book has appeared, promising to be "a comprehensive yet non-technical work on the history and content of Jewish Worship." Written for the "intelligent layman," Abraham Millgram's *Jewish Worship* is designed to satisfy the long-felt need for an interesting, yet scholarly, survey of the liturgy.

Jewish Worship is interesting because its author writes with such an obvious love of his subject matter. For him, liturgy is "a living growing organism," and the Siddur is an expression of the "Jewish soul." With sheer joy, he shows Jewish prayer to be the point of convergence of the multiple cross-currents of Jewish tradition. Talmudic law mixes freely with Kabbalistic lore; abstruse *piyyutim* alternate with pious supplications whose very simplicity bespeaks the essence of religion's immediacy. Like an archaeologist reconstructing the strata of what was originally just an apparent pile of debris, Millgram is at his best in unravelling the numerous strands of the seemingly amorphous Siddur. The prayerbook is

revealed as an intelligible entity, with a basic substructure and layer after layer of later additions methodically inserted with an eye toward artistic unity. Far from feeling lost in a maze of verbiage, the informed worshipper recognizes structural order and thematic congruence.

The scope of *Jewish Worship* is, indeed, comprehensive. The author describes fully the daily, holiday, and life cycle liturgy, and pauses regularly to discuss even those topics which are only tangentially related to his major concern. We are thus given lengthy accounts of such matters as the history of the synagogue, the rise and development of *hazzanut*, and rabbinic theology. But these subjects are important for Millgram, since they provide the background for an appreciation of the richness of the worship experience.

Millgram views Jewish prayer as a reflection of one continuous Jewish tradition. Though he sees the beginnings of synagogue liturgy in the Babylonian Exile, he emphasizes the crucial influence of the *Tannaim* and *Amoraim*. It is they who formulated the basic structure and ideas of Jewish worship and laid the foundation for a liturgical tradition destined to enhance Jewish life in every generation thereafter. Since the Babylonian rite became the dominant influence for us, Millgram considers the Babylonian authorities to have been the true conveyors of rabbinic tradition, and he concentrates his attention on them. Thus, he deals with the Palestinian rite only in terms of the *payyetanim* and the liturgical freedom which their poetry represented. In Millgram's opinion, this considerable freedom threatened the continuity of rabbinic

tradition, and he lauds the written canonization of prayer texts in Gaonic *siddurim* for preventing the tradition's inundation by foreign elements. Prayers of later medieval origin are evaluated positively, since their very inclusion in the liturgy implies, for Millgram, that they have withstood "the test of time," and are in essential harmony with the tradition. In his final chapter, "Jewish Worship in Modern Times," Millgram discusses the challenge of the Enlightenment and of modernity, and briefly surveys the liturgical responses of Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist prayer books, all the while considering their relationships to the traditional Siddur.

Above all, Millgram wants us to appreciate the human element that constitutes the hidden message written invisibly between the lines of the prayers, and the incidents, both factual and legendary, which prompted this "service of the heart" to become a lasting composite of Jewish experience. To tell this story, he consulted traditional rabbinic texts and an array of modern thinkers—ranging from pioneer liturgists like Zunz and Elbogen to such contemporary scholars as Joseph Heinemann. His approach to their theories, however, is selective, with little consideration given to alternative solutions. When, for example, he accepts the traditional account of the liturgy's beginnings in the work of a Great Synagogue (which he dates between the sixth and the fourth centuries B.C.E.), he fails to enter into the very complex questions of what exactly that Great Synagogue was, when it existed, and even whether it existed at all. Millgram is similarly quick to accept without question Jacob Mann's contention that external pressures determined the location of many prayers in the Siddur;

thus, for example, the Church is said to have banned the Shema, whereupon Jews inserted it elsewhere in the liturgy, beyond the eye of censors. Though Mann's fascinating theory has good support in Gaonic and medieval sources, Millgram fails to note that these very sources are sometimes contradictory, and that the reasoning offered by their authors is not necessarily an infallible explanation for phenomena that occurred centuries before they wrote.

Millgram draws extensively on Heinemann's studies, adopting, for example, his radical understanding of the *Haftarah* blessings as being originally a proto-*Amidah*. But he seems, at times, to deny the thesis upon which the above theory is based. Heinemann could see a prior and different function for the *Haftarah* benedictions precisely because he recognized the absence, rather than the presence, of a single authoritative tradition in pre-Gaonic times. He denied the "philological" approach of classical liturgists, which presumed an original text for prayers, and insisted, instead, that Jewish liturgy was originally a more creative enterprise in which given themes could be expressed by a multitude of equally acceptable alternatives. Most of these options were undoubtedly lost. Of those that remained, some became normative in their original places, while others—like our present *Haftarah* blessings—are recognizable as standardized elements elsewhere in the Siddur. Though the Babylonian Gaonim did tend to fix liturgical texts, the Palestinians did not, as the enormous variety of liturgical expression in the Genizah fragments makes very clear. Millgram glosses over the great liturgical variation within both Talmuds and practi-

cally ignores the Palestinian rite entirely.

Above all, it is traditional legend which Millgram loves. He cannot resist noting that *Adon olam* may be one of Solomon Ibn Gabirol's poems, even though he knows there is not one shred of evidence to substantiate such a claim. Despite the fact that the *Unetanneh tokef* has Byzantine roots and early Christian parallels, Millgram adheres to the tradition of ascribing it to a certain Rabbi Amnon, who is said to have composed the poem after being tortured by medieval Christian authorities. Similarly, he interprets Saadia as saying that his own *sidur* was written "for the average layman to follow the service," when, in fact, it would have been virtually impossible for an unlearned man to pray from *Siddur Saadia* without, as Elbogen put it, "an extended table of contents or a subject index."

There are some inconsistencies and factual errors in *Jewish Worship*. *Yigdal*, for example, is variously dated in both the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries; and Reform Judaism is incorrectly charged with denying the concept of the peoplehood of Israel. But these errors are of minor importance relative to the central message of the book, a plea for the restoration of Jewish piety. Millgram is writing not just a factual survey of Jewish liturgy, but an inspirational account as well. At heart, he is concerned that the "religious fervor of the Jew, which once expressed itself in daily prayer, has all but vanished . . . their 'fountain of living waters' has dried up and 'empty cisterns' have become their lot."

This underlying concern helps explain Millgram's use of his sources. Scholarly theory, Talmudic legend, *midrash* and *aggadah*—all

are considered efficacious in rendering the liturgy intelligible and meaningful. Fact and myth play a role in reawakening Jewish faith. Millgram's account of the "service of the heart" is meant, above all, to appeal to the heart.

In fact, Millgram's image of the past approaches at times a purely romantic conception of Jewish history in which the vast majority of Jews are seen as poor and oppressed, but sustained through study of Torah, sagely guidance, and daily supplication to God. We are told, for example, that in the *shtiebel*, where synagogue pews were passed on from father to son, "the Jew experienced the exaltation of being a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and a member of the Holy Congregation of Israel." Yet it is more probable that the commonfolk, whose social class determined their being seated behind the learned and wealthy, felt something less than this "exaltation" of communal unity.

Nor is the author necessarily correct when he sees the Zohar as a desirable corrective against rationalism which was "dangerous . . . leading some Jews to abandon their traditions of Judaism." And when, near the end of *Jewish Worship*, Millgram states categorically that "new symbolism and new music" amount to "sowing seeds of destruction," he seems to forget the first half of his book where he demonstrated so well that very same impulse toward creativity which generated original prayers like *Kol nidrei* and *Lekha dodi*, and innovative customs like *Yahrzeit* and *Bar Mizvah*. Though now a part of that very heritage which Rabbi Millgram seeks to preserve, these, too, were once novelties. Far from sowing seeds of destruction, they served to enrich Jewish tradition all the more.

In the final analysis, then, it is Rabbi Millgram's love of his tradition that both produces his shortcomings and contributes to his success. Though *Jewish Worship* lapses frequently into a search for an idyllic past when faith and piety abounded, it succeeds overall in conveying the author's love for his subject which is evident everywhere in this well-structured, easily readable and comprehensive account of the fullness of liturgical development.

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For the Sake of Heaven

Hasidic Prayer. By LOUIS JACOBS. New York. Schocken Books, 1973. 195 pp. \$10.00.

Reviewed by EVELYN GARFIEL

JACOBS' *Hasidic Prayer* is an important contribution to our understanding of Hasidism. The style is direct and non-technical, and Jacobs describes Hasidism's ideas clearly and sympathetically, albeit with notable objectivity. His organization of the material is brilliant—no mean feat when we take into account the variety and multiplicity of Hasidic teachings and practices, and the number of Rabbis and Zaddikim with their frequently contradictory opinions on every issue of importance: on the very nature of prayer or on so basic a question as to which prayer book is the correct one, the Sephardic, the Lurianic version of the Sephardic, or the Traditional Ashkenazic.

The second chapter, on "The Nature of Hasidic Prayer," is a significant exposition of the inner meanings of Hasidism and, in a sense, constitutes the core of the book.

We are made aware of the role of the central figure in Hasidism, the Hasid or Zaddik, who is conceived of as a man of great spiritual powers, even able to affect the course of human and universal events. The very aims and expectations of prayer are different for the Zaddik and for the simple man. Though "... the leaders of the movement," says Jacobs, "believed that God accepted every true prayer, even if it was confused and in error, this was because nothing higher could have been expected from 'these untutored ones.' The Hasid . . . was expected to rise to a much higher realm in his prayers and for him, the simple prayer was emphatically not enough." Prayer, for the Zaddik, "is essentially an exercise in *bittul ha-yesh*, the annihilation of selfhood, the soul soaring to God with the ego left behind." Moreover, prayer, in Hasidism, is the supreme religious act, study of Torah and good deeds acquiring importance not as ends in themselves, but as essential aids or stepping stones in preparation for real prayer. This is only one instance of the gulf between traditional rabbinic Judaism and Hasidism.

That Hasidic beliefs, religious experiences and prayers, so clearly derived from (or at least, dependent upon) the Zohar, do not share the universe of discourse of rabbinic Judaism, that they are, in effect, often alien to the Judaism of the Talmud, and that Hasidism, thus, constitutes less a development out of classical Judaism than something extraneous to the rabbinic mind—all this is here and there adumbrated by Jacobs, but not, I feel, adequately stressed. For, basically, rabbinic religious experience is characterized by an experience of "normal mysticism" (to use Kadushin's term), whereas Hasidic religious experience aims at the "an-

nihilation of the self" in its striving for unification with God. Hasidic mysticism, thus, has much in common with mystical experience in Christianity and other religions; rabbinic Judaism's normal mysticism is quite different, uniquely and characteristically Jewish.

We are given a careful explanation of the polemic on the recital of the *Le-Shem Yihud* statement preceding the *Shema*, and its theological implications. Other halakhic issues presented by certain Hasidic practices associated with the prayers are given in some detail and help us to enter into the very minds of the leading Hasidim: is it, or is it not, permitted to wear a woolen tallit at prayer (for fear of *shaatnez*); is it, or is it not, permitted to eat anything, or to drink tea or coffee, before the morning prayers; is it, or is it not, proper to have a cantor and a choir lead in services; is it, or is it not, correct to recite the Hallel on Passover *Eve*, and other such questions.

The last chapter ends on a gentle spiritual note with a quotation from the famous Rabbi Joseph Saul Nathanson (d. 1875) on the issue of whether to use the Ashkenazic or the Sephardic prayerbook. "The main thing," Nathanson concludes, "is to behave always with humility and never to quarrel over these matters. The Lord who searches all hearts knows full well that your intention is for the sake of Heaven."

The author has culled and, himself, translated long and pertinent selections from various Hebrew and Yiddish original Hasidic sources, so that the English reader may learn at first hand, as it were, what this or that famous authority taught. These selections add immeasurably to our sense of direct penetration into Hasidic religious experience and halakhic reasoning. *Hasidic*

Prayer should prove to be, in addition, an excellent in-course text for Adult Study groups, college and graduate courses in that strange and still very much alive movement in Judaism—Hasidism.

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To Sanctify the Sabbath

A Shabbat Manual. Ed., W. GUNTHER PLAUT. Pub. for the CCAR. KTAV Publishing House. New York, 1972. vii + 104 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by BERNARD J. BAMBERGER

THIS LITTLE book is intended to give practical assistance to Jews who want to observe the Sabbath meaningfully in their homes. Intended in the first instance for Reform Jews, it will be of value to many others as well. It provides liturgical materials, music, and selected readings in addition to information, interpretation, and exhortation.

The need and usefulness of the volume have been demonstrated by the enthusiastic reception it has received; nearly 20,000 copies had been sold when this review was written. But though the book meets many specific needs, it also raises some broad theoretical questions. It has, for example, been hailed as evidence of a new spirit in the Reform movement: Reform, we read, "is not actually embracing *halakhah*, but something akin to it" (*The Reconstructionist*, March, 1973, p. 6). And Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut, the editor of the *Manual*, himself sees this as a "major attempt of the Reform rabbinate to deal directly with Reform Halachah" (p. iii). Such statements require examination.

I

The negative aspects of the Reform movement have been exaggerated, not only by its critics, but also by some of its adherents. It is proper, therefore, to call attention to a not wholly dissimilar book which appeared in 1898. Entitled *Sabbath Sentiment*, it was the work of Rabbi Henry Berkowitz of Philadelphia, a member of the first class ordained at the Hebrew Union College. Like the new *Manual*, it included a home service for Sabbath evening, as well as readings, exhortations, music—even illustrations, since book publishing was less costly in those days.¹ So the effort to restore religious observance in the home was being made back in the palmy days of “classical Reform”—whatever that phrase may mean. And Berkowitz’s effort had more than local significance; his version of the *kiddush* was incorporated into the Union Prayer Book, used extensively in Reform households.

This is an early instance of a trend in Reform which must be characterized as indigenous, and which long antedated the ordeal of Hitlerism and the rise of the State of Israel. At the start, the leaders of the Reform movement had declared large segments of traditional law to be obsolete and no longer binding. These declarations were not the cause, but the result, of the decline in Jewish religious observance. Large masses of Jews were discarding traditional rules and prohibitions as meaningless and unnecessary; therefore, the spokesmen of Reform stressed what they considered the essential, enduring, and viable elements of Jewish religion—chiefly theological and moral values.

The generation that had been reared in a desiccated form of Or-

thodoxy, and had known Judaism as little more than conformity to ritual procedures, most of them “don’ts,” found something liberating and inspiring in the negations of Reform. They were deeply stirred by the assurance that they could be positive and loyal Jews without fulfilling all of the ceremonial details. But they could not transmit this sense of glad liberation to their children, who had never been compelled to follow all the dietary and Sabbath regulations, and, therefore, derived no spiritual life from *not* observing them. Only something positive and concrete could give meaning to their Jewish identity and spiritual enrichment to their lives. The logic of the situation led, inevitably, to a re-emphasis on observance. In the 1870’s, Rabbi David Einhorn, often characterized as a radical Reformer, was carrying on a campaign to persuade Jewish business men in New York City to close their establishments on the Sabbath. Berkowitz’s contribution was made at the close of the nineteenth century. In subsequent decades there was an increasing stress on “customs and ceremonies” in Reform religious schools, and manuals were provided to guide parents in reintroducing home observance.² By the 1930’s, many Reform Jews were providing their children with religious experiences which the parents had not received in their own childhood.

Much has happened since then. We need not here review the factors which, more recently, have led to greater emphasis on Jewish peoplehood, Hebrew, tradition, and ritual. The new *Sabbath Manual*, then, is a vigorous expression of a trend which is by no means novel or unprecedented in Reform.

²S. H. Markowitz, *Leading a Jewish Life in the Modern World* (New York: UAHG, 1942).

¹It was reprinted twice in this century.

In recognizing this fact, and in calling attention to Berkowitz's pioneer effort, I am in no way disparaging the merits of the present excellent volume. I regret only that Berkowitz's *kiddush* was not included in it as an alternative or supplement to the traditional Hebrew text—which is provided with a literal, not particularly felicitous, English version. Except for verses from Proverbs 31, Berkowitz's service was entirely original. Many moderns may find it more "relevant" (you should excuse the expression!) than the somewhat formal allusions of the traditional text to creation, the exodus, and the election of Israel. Consider these words of Berkowitz:

The brightness of the Sabbath light shines forth to tell that the divine spirit of love abides within our home. In that light all our blessings are enriched, all our griefs and trials softened. At this hour, God's messenger of peace comes and turns the hearts of the parents to the children and the hearts of the children to the parents, strengthening the bonds of our devotion to that pure and lofty ideal of the home which is pictured in sacred writ.

And again:

Let us praise God with this symbol of joy [i.e., the wine cup] and thank Him for all the blessings of the week that is gone; for life, health, and strength; for home, love, and friendship; for the discipline of our trials and temptations; for the happiness that has come to us out of our labors.

II

The new *Manual* offers an abundance of varied material, including a substantial amount in Hebrew. Moreover, its aim is not merely to evoke "sentiment," but to bring about a more definite and explicit commitment. It explains some of the differences between Reform and

traditional observance. To those who have not yet tried seriously to establish a Sabbath atmosphere in their homes, it appeals for a start, even in a partial way. The book further attempts to define specific acts which should, and should not, be performed on the Sabbath.

This is, from the theoretical standpoint, the most problematical aspect of the work. It defines mitzvah as "what a Jew ought to do in response to his God and to the tradition of his people." (And the response should be one of personal commitment rather than a mere conformity.) It presents the various mitzvot under the heading "Catalogue of Shabbat Opportunities," and it speaks of options. But then it goes on to such blunt and unequivocal statements as "It is a mitzvah to recite or chant the Kiddush," and "It is a mitzvah not to participate in a social event during Shabbat worship hours," and it classifies such statements under the traditional headings of *Mitzvot Aseh* and *Mitzvot Lo Ta'aseh*. No clear criteria are offered for the inclusion of the fourteen specific items in this section, or for the omission of many other, chiefly prohibitory, laws which traditional halakhah regards as essential.

This ambiguity demonstrates, in my opinion, the unwisdom of using the word *halakhah* except in the context of Orthodox Jewish belief and practice. Historically, this word has meant something quite definite. Halakhah is a legal system, grounded in the conviction that its content was divinely revealed, and sustained by the power of the community to compel its members to conform. It was not a catalogue of opportunities commended to the individual for his acceptance, but a code which no one dared question, and for the violation of which severe penalties could be imposed. Moreover, despite disputes about

specific points of law and numerous variations of custom, the substance of halakhah was, for the most part, highly defined, and subject to only limited modification.

Furthermore, halakhah includes many elements that are flatly contravened by Reform theory and practice. The ordination of women as rabbis, which has been hailed as an important breakthrough by the Reform movement, is incompatible with the halakhah, which assigns women an inferior and subordinate role in Jewish life. (No feeble apologetic can change this fact!) Moreover, most of the halakhah currently practiced is ritual in character; but a "Reform halakhah" would have to define, in concrete terms, the moral obligations of the individual and of the community, especially as regards issues of social justice. And tradition provides only limited help in the translation of prophetic ideals into positive and negative commandments.

For all these reasons, the leaders of Reform would be well advised to avoid the term halakhah, even if qualified as "Reform halakhah." A more suitable term, to my mind, would be "patterns of Reform Jewish living"—or something similar. This would be less pretentious and historically more accurate. But, above all, it would avoid confusion in the minds of adherents of Reform, opponents of Reform, and other Jews who are neither.

My reservations, however, are almost all theoretical. In practice, the *Manual* will benefit not only Reform Jews, but many others who are remote from Orthodoxy—perhaps even from formal religion in general—and yet want to regain for themselves and for their children some of the values of our tradition.

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Three on the Holocaust

Judenrat, The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe Under Nazi Occupation. By ISALAH TRUNK. The Macmillan Company. New York, 1972. xxv + 664 pp., 2 maps, 25 illustrations. \$14.95.

Faith After the Holocaust. By ELIEZER BERKOVITS. KTAV Publishing House Inc., New York, 1973. 180 pp. \$7.50.

The Harrowing of Hell—Dachau. By MARCUS J. SMITH. University of New Mexico Press. New Mexico, 1972. 298 pp. \$6.95.

Reviewed by CHARLES W. STECKEL

I FIRMLY believe that the day is not too distant when a historian with the talent of Graetz, Dubnov or Baron will dedicate all of his life to the writing of Holocaust history. Seminaries in America and universities in Israel should prepare a curriculum in their history departments to meet this great challenge, which calls for a multilingual research ability and a knowledge of Hebrew, Yiddish, German and Slavic languages, as well as of English. In the meantime, books dealing with the *Shoah* are being written which are classics from the point of view of historiography. Isaiah Trunk has presented us with such a volume in *Judenrat*. The Introduction, discussing some basic issues of the Councils, was written by Jacob Robinson.

The author's intention is expressed in the preface: "I have endeavored to present a well-balanced picture of the Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe . . . It was not my intention to pronounce judgment." He researched German documents and archives, interviewed Ghetto policemen, Council members and survivors. He studied Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian publications, YIVO and *Yad Vashem* ques-

tionnaires and material. Geographically speaking, Dr. Trunk's study encompasses all of pre-war Poland, the Baltic States, Soviet Byelorussia, the Ukraine and Crimea. By June, 1941, approximately 5,100,000 Jews resided in the same territory. Although the author could not obtain complete information on all Jewish settlements of the whole area, nevertheless he considers his limited material representative of the region under discussion.

The range of the activities of the *Judenraete* covered the same aspects of human existence (except for such needs as electricity, street-cars, etc.) which cities, towns and hamlets provided for their population. These included public welfare, medical aid and health service. Religious, cultural and educational programs, as well as administration, jurisdiction over the supply of forced labor, distribution of food and "resettlement" were among the responsibilities of the Councils. In view of all this, three fundamental questions must be asked: 1. Why did the Germans organize the *Judenraete*? 2. Could the creation of the Councils have been prevented? and 3. Were the Jewish Councils a positive or a negative factor in the final outcome of the Holocaust? These questions are intriguing, not only to the historian, but, also, to the political scientist as well.

The sinister plan of organizing Jewish Councils was based on three reasons: a) economic-practical, b) external-political, and c) psychological.

Let us begin with the third. The Chief of the Security Police, Reinhard Heydrich, sent a letter, dated Berlin, 21 September, 1939, to all task forces in the conquered Polish territories, stating: "In each Jewish community, a Council of Jewish Elders is to be set up which, as far as possible, is to be composed of

the remaining influential personalities and rabbis." The Germans wanted to create the impression that the Jewish communities were going to be self-ruled. Any prison administration would be able to pacify its inmates by creating hope and by giving them, at least temporarily, a voice in vital matters. This kind of camouflage worked in all occupied lands in relationship to the general, as well as the Jewish, population.

The plan was psychologically motivated. The subjugated nations, primarily the Jews, were given the alternative of complete chaos or of internal autonomy directed and controlled by the occupier. This way the Jews were easily trapped. Although the "Final Solution" was not formulated until January, 1942, the attempt to create *Judenraete* was the introduction to it.

There was, at least at the beginning of the war, another external-political reason. No agreement existed between the belligerents—the Allies and Germany—in regard to the acceptance and validity of the Geneva and Tokyo Conventions protecting the civilian population in the War Zone. Nevertheless, the International Red Cross and the Joint Distribution Committee operated in Poland from 1939 until the summer of 1941. The Germans wanted to create the impression that they were behaving in a civilized manner. It was advisable, therefore, to proceed slowly, step by step. After all, Rudolf Hess had been sent on his mission to England in May, 1941, to "convert" the British, and to make them more amenable to the plan of dividing the world into spheres of interest. The rejection of Hess and his mission by the Allies signaled that the war would continue to the bitter end. The attack on the Soviet Union and the finalizing of the "Final Solution" complemented

each other as the result of Hitler's megalomaniacal belief that the Wehrmacht could fight on two fronts and still win the war.

The economic-practical reason was, perhaps, the most important, according to the thinking of the Wehrmacht. From the very beginning, the generals knew that a prolonged war would tax German manpower and would exhaust raw material and economic resources to the breaking point. They argued, therefore, that it was not in the interest of the German war machine to murder irreplaceable skilled workers and craftsmen employed in defense factories. But even this argument failed in the face of the fanaticism of the S.S., and the extermination policy prevailed. However, because the Germans expected of the *Judenraete* the "delivery of forced laborers, collection of imposed material *leistungen*, filling production orders for ghetto industry," the Jews were instinctively on the right track, stalling for time in a desperate situation. The results of the S.S.-Wehrmacht controversy were tragic from the Jewish point of view, but the hope created cannot be judged, *a posteriori*, as total failure.

Furthermore, the German Army, as well as the S.S., were in agreement that concentrating the Jews within the boundaries of the ghettos made them submissive to terror. Demoralized by economic ruin, the Jews could be controlled more easily. The collective responsibility of the ghetto for every single Jew if he did not obey orders and please his German master, or his deputy, was a very important aspect of German policy in creating the Councils.

Could the Jews have prevented the creation of ghettos and Councils? The answer is no! Unfortunately, the Allies did not reply to

a letter of the I.R.C. in 1939 to renew the Geneva and Tokyo Conventions in regard to the protection of the civilian population in the War Zone, and the Jews paid dearly for this sin of omission. Secondly, the Germans imposed their will brutally upon subjugated nations. Even their allies (satellites) marched according to the German tune, and, certainly, benevolent neutrals were very cautious to be in accordance with German demands and policy.

Trunk tries to explain the difference between "cooperation" and "collaboration," and uses the definition of these two terms propounded by Professor Stanley Hoffman. Hoffman stated that "*collaboration d'Etat* for reasons of state, i.e., to safeguard French interests in inner-state relationship between the defeated power and the victor" differed from "an openly desired cooperation with and imitation of the German regime (quite apart from any concern for the interests of France)." What Hoffman stated about France and Vichy could be said about Horthy's Hungary and Antonescu's Rumania, to mention only two of the European collaborators. Says Trunk,

We think that the Council's collaboration with the Germans can, *mutatis mutandis*, be defined as *collaboration d'Etat*, a term which is closer to our definition of cooperation. Considering their tasks, cooperation with the authorities was unavoidable for the Councils. The very rationale of their existence would have vanished without it.

Historians must use language precisely. In this case, the dictionary should have been consulted. This is not a matter of semantics alone. Regrettably, Trunk reversed himself unintentionally and adopted the terminology used by Hilberg, Reitlinger, Trevor-Roper, Bettelheim and Arendt, who failed to recognize the distinction between

them. Although Dr. Trunk elaborates that "there were basic differences between non-Jewish collaboration and Jewish cooperation," he weakens his argument by using the wrong terminology. How can anyone compare Marshall Pétain's and Pierre Laval's collaboration-cooperation with the cooperation of any *Judenrat*, including the most corrupted and demoralized? We are not aware of any personal threat to Pétain or Laval, or to members of their families, during the German occupation.

A comparison of *Judenraete* with POW camps would have been more appropriate. POW's must cooperate with their captors, who give the orders and determine how the camps are going to function. Survival instinct demands that they obey orders, regardless of who will survive. Collaboration, on the other hand, means outright betrayal. I am positive that Dr. Trunk did not intend to suggest that betrayal was the principle which prevailed among the Jewish Councils. I hope that, in the second edition of this book, he will be able to clarify the unfortunate use of misleading terms.

In discussing the attitude of the Councils toward physical resistance, the author underscores the following facts:

The situation of the Jews in the tightly sealed ghettos was such that the objective conditions for physical resistance did not exist.

Isolation, the hostility of the neighbors (with only few exceptions), Quislings everywhere helping the Germans, and Volksdeutsche loyal to the Nazis made a meaningful and organized resistance in the ghettos impossible.

There were other obstacles as well. "The Jews were confident that the world was not lawless." It is important to remind ourselves that

the Jews were not the only ones who believed the Germans incapable of atrocities and barbarism. Walter Laqueur, in his book, *Russia and Germany*, describes the situation as follows:

The Russians were unprepared for the German onslaught in June 1941 in more than one sense. Sholokhov, in his *Nauka Nenavisti*, has described the shock experienced by Soviet citizens when they realized that the behavior of the Germans in the occupied territories was very far indeed from their traditional image of the civilized and orderly German; they could not at first believe the news about mass killings, mass robbery, and brutal oppression. They had always held the Germans in special esteem (as Stalin had told Emil Ludwig in a famous interview: "the Germans were solid, reliable, sober people who could be trusted").

In summarizing these facts we find the ghetto and its *Judenrat*, despite the weak, corrupt and demoralized individuals, to have been a place where saints, martyrs and heroes did their share that the glory of Israel might live on forever.

Professor Eliezer Berkovits is a religious philosopher who deals with, among other themes, theological questions related to faith after the Holocaust. This is the first time, to the best of my knowledge, that an Orthodox rabbi has undertaken to write a Holocaust theology, using the classical sources and wisdom of Judaism methodically and systematically. Furthermore, he tries to bring the Holocaust into the context of world history and to trace its influence upon the existence and survival of the Jewish people.

We are grateful to Dr. Berkovits for telling us that an Orthodox Jew can, and should, discuss pertinent questions concerning the great

tragedy; for formulating answers to these questions from an Orthodox point of view. It is only fair to assume that the author does not follow the Hasidic saint, who said: "For the faithful there are no questions, for the non-believer there are no answers." Dr. Berkovits thinks that an educated and intelligent believer, who believes and questions, has a place in the congregation of the faithful.

Berkovits speaks of the "Theology of Intolerance." He is quite correct when he writes that "Western civilization has been essentially Christian civilization. From the point of view of the spirit, the Holocaust has been a Christian catastrophe much more than a Jewish one." He quotes Rabbi M. D. Weissmandel's conversation at Bratislava with Archbishop Kametko, whom the rabbi had known from happier days. The rabbi pleaded with the Archbishop and asked him to influence his former secretary, Msgr. Tisso (President of Slovakia) to prevent the expulsion of the Jews from the country. Weissmandel received the following answer: "This, being a Sunday, is a holy day for us. Neither I nor Father Tisso occupy ourselves with profane matters on this day." Slovakia was not an isolated case. I have first hand knowledge that the same thing happened in Croatia and Hungary.

In discussing "radical theology" and the death of God, Berkovits claims, as stated above, that the radical theology of Protestant theologians is an exclusive Christian concern. After having made this statement (p. 50), he has a lengthy chapter (pp. 50-60) in which he confronts spokesmen of radical theology like Thomas J. J. Altizer, W. Hamilton, and Harvey Cox with their less radical contemporaries, G. Vahamian, R. Bultmann and others. *Pro cui bono?*

At this point we might have expected that Professor Berkovits would devote a few pages to non-Orthodox rabbis and scholars, who have dealt with the Holocaust from a religio-philosophical and theological point of view. To mention all of them is impossible! But not to mention any of them is surprising, to put it mildly. Ignaz Maybaum followed the German Liberal tradition in discussing: "What happened?" *The Face of God After Auschwitz* appeared in 1965. Richard L. Rubenstein challenged all Jewish thinkers and theologians. Regardless of whether one approves or disapproves of Rubenstein's *After Auschwitz* (1966), he should be mentioned, disapprovingly, of course. Berkovits, the traditionalist and Orthodox rabbi-scholar, should have confronted Rubenstein and discussed the two diametrically opposed philosophies. The author points out that chaos has engulfed the world. "The very future of man is in jeopardy. The sickness is universal." How can a Jew meet the challenge in the midst of universal chaos and disintegration? Answer: through self-understanding of the role which he plays in world history.

Another thinker, Emil L. Fackenheim, stated, in *God's Presence in History* (1970), that God remains present in history and in a special relation to His elected people. Our existence, survival and everyday action are commanded by our ancient covenant with God, who speaks to His suffering servants from the furnaces of Auschwitz, and through the ashes of the victims of crematoria.

The Jews "are gradually recovering from a quasi-paralysis" and are asking questions. Briefly: Research into the religio-philosophical aspect of the Holocaust must be done in places where Jewish religion is taught, analyzed and ex-

panded. Berkovits has proven the point—*ut figura docet*. Silence on the subject is unacceptable. Outcry is more meaningful than a timid and benumbed silence. Berkovits is again correct in declaring that there are two motivations for the defamation of Jewish martyrdom during the Nazi-German horror: a bad gentile conscience and a bad Jewish conscience. Whether God was present or absent during the Holocaust period is a complex religio-philosophical problem; that man was absent where he should have been present is a sign of ethical and moral decay.

The author concludes that he has faith in the future of man because of Abraham Seidman, who had been taken from the Warsaw Ghetto to the Umschlagplatz to be sent to Auschwitz. In the few remaining minutes before the transport left he wrote a letter to his children asking their forgiveness should he ever have offended or hurt them. "Because of what man did to the man Abraham Seidman I have no faith in man; because of the Jew Seidman I have faith in the future of man."

On April 29, 1945, the Allies liberated the concentration camp of Dachau from the German Army. The next day, Dr. Marcus J. Smith, an American physician, arrived with a team of ten American soldiers and a French transportation squad. Their assignment was to feed, clothe, treat and save thirty-four thousand starving civilians found in the camp.

Dr. Smith dedicated his book to "the post-World War II generation in the hope that their knowledge of a police state is gained only from reading." The author admits that for 25 years he was unable to think about his experience at Dachau, and says: "Recently my nightmare began to recur, exhumed by vio-

lence in our troubled country." Almost 28 years after the liberation, he decided to share the Dachau experience with his fellowmen.

Every country in Europe, except Monaco, was represented at Dachau. There were six Americans in the camp, among them a POW, Major Rene J. Guirard from Illinois. Two thousand seven hundred, or 8.5 per cent, of the inmate population were Jews. The small number is not surprising. By that time most of the European Jews had been killed.

Dr. Smith describes the inmates at Dachau as

faces without expression, eyes lifeless and sunken, cheekbones prominent, lips cracked, hair (when present) unkempt, skin ashen. Their legs are often swollen; this interferes with knee bending. Starved people find walking difficult or impossible. They shuffle along, seem to droop; their breathing is labored . . . They lack mental and physical stamina, they seem to be mentally dull, exhausted, and depressed.

Nothing to be ashamed of in Dachau! Political, military, religious leaders, and members of their families were among the inmates. A real camp for aristocrats! Along with relatives of officers captured by the Germans during the battle for Stalingrad were such prisoners as Nicholas Horthy, Jr., the son of Admiral Horthy, Captain Peter Churchill, a distant relative of the British Prime Minister, Alexei Kokosen, a nephew of Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, the son of Marshal Pietro Badoglio of Italy, Leon Blum's wife, the wife and daughter of Kurt von Schuschnigg of Austria, and many others.

The author, being a physician, discusses medical research and experiments practiced by the infamous Germany physicians, Rascher and Schilling. A Polish priest of the

Capucin Order, Father Stanislaw Wolak, described how experiments were conducted at Dachau. "Twenty Polish, Dutch and Czech priests were selected to perform their duty for the welfare of mankind." Prisoners were either directly exposed to infected mosquitoes or were inoculated with infected blood. Medical investigations were conducted constantly at Dachau between 1941-45; teams of German physicians visited the camp to study the results and to apply them elsewhere.

Does this mean that God was not present at Dachau, or does it mean that man was absent, that he had failed to educate man? The sign of hope that man can mature in crisis and disaster was short-lived. The author comments:

It is evident that whatever unity existed at the time of liberation (*my insert*, i.e. among the inmates) is beginning to dissipate. For a few days all the inmates loved each other. There were many expressions of sympathy for the Jews; it was obvious that they had suffered more, in every way, than the other internees. But now we hear that some of the Jews are being unfairly treated by other inmates: they are receiving less food; their housing is poorer.

The Jews were not the only group to complain; soon, other ethnic groups registered their complaints as well.

Dr. Smith writes objectively and critically. He says that in March, 1945, the army had just begun to form units to handle civilian problems. His misgivings were brought on by questions asked in the classroom, which revealed a lack of understanding of the problems of homeless and persecuted people. The instructors were undisturbed. Naivete, ignorance, lack of sympathy and, often, intolerance, did not bother them. After all, the army thinks—or tries to think—of every-

thing, or almost of everything. But even this shortcoming cannot diminish our lasting gratitude to the Allies, and particularly to Americans, for their sincere effort in saving lives, under very difficult circumstances.

CHARLES W. STECKEL is chaplain at the City of Hope Medical Center. He has written much on the question of Jewish survival.

The Words of a Great Zionist

Memoirs, Diaries, Letters. By ARTHUR RUPPIN. With an Afterword by Moshe Dayan. London. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1971, 332 pp. \$6.95.

Reviewed by THEODORE N. LEWIS

AMONG THE architects of the State of Israel, Arthur Ruppin ranks at the very top, and only because he labored behind the scenes, helping to provide a firm economic foundation for the Yishuv, is he less known than some of the more popular figures, like Sokolow or Ussishkin. His work was in no way inferior to theirs, and his contribution as large, if not larger.

What makes his faith in a Jewish Palestine so remarkable is that he abandoned a promising career in Germany as a lawyer and banker to settle in the land, in 1907, when it was barren and desolate. That he was able to identify himself thoroughly with the early Russian Jewish settlers, the *haluzim*, whose mode of life and thought was radically different from his, testifies to his uncompromising love for Erez Yisrael.

This volume provides an unforgettable picture of the early days of the Yishuv and of its leading personalities, of the conflicts and struggles, triumphs and failures of

those brave pioneers who created modern Israel. Every problem, but particularly that of the Arabs, is analyzed in depth. What is astounding is that Ruppin's approach to the latter—he offers no solution—is relevant to this very day, so much so that none other than Moshe Dayan endorses it in toto.

Ruppin was born on March 1, 1876, in Rawitch, but the family moved to Magdeburg in January, 1887. No matter what business the father pursued, he met with failure, even at gambling—which, despite losses, he could never give up. From 1887 to 1894 they endured grinding poverty, living, literally, on potatoes, and often “that too was in short supply.” Clothing came from rich Berlin relatives and the “fit” was not important. “Shoes were a greater problem,” because those which arrived were too small. Fortunately, while quite young, Arthur went to work for a wealthy grain merchant, and in 1896 became the managing clerk of the firm with a yearly salary of 3,000 marks! This made him exceptionally happy because “I finally have been able to provide my parents with a quiet life, free from care.” After eight years he left to prepare for a professional career. A prize of 6,000 marks, won in an essay contest in 1903 while he was a student at the University of Halle, not only rescued him from want, but gave him a measure of fame.

He abandoned a promising legal career after five years (1902–1907), because of the intense anti-Semitism which he had met at every turn and which he describes in detail. It was this recognition that he was an alien and outsider which led him to Zionism and Jewish nationalism. As early as February 25, 1893, we find this prophetic entry—“When I mention the possibility that Jews may one day be thrown out of Germany . . .

(everybody) considers it nonsense. But the possibility is not all that remote. Anti-Semitism is growing by leaps and bounds.” On March 22, 1897, we find this astounding estimate of the Germans: “There are imponderable aspects of the German national character of which we Jews with our sophistry are unaware, or at least we are quite incapable of understanding them.” This estimate the Jews ignored—to their ultimate sorrow. A poem which he composed in 1902, “My Fatherland—A Jew's Lament,” bemoans his utter rejection by his native land. While hosts of prominent German Jews, including Walter Rathenau, shared this conviction, they lacked Ruppin's stamina to pull up stakes, to repudiate Germany for Erez Yisrael, and to dedicate themselves to the service of their people. Better to understand his fellow Jews, about whom he began to write the sociological study which appeared in 1904 and which is basically still authoritative, he went to Crackow, where he met “real Jews with peyots and caftans,” and discovered the harsh poverty which the Jewish masses suffered. From Crackow he went to Amsterdam and thence to London.

Joining the Zionist organization in March, 1905, he arrived in Palestine in 1907, and soon became the representative of the organization. Without delay, he formed the Palestine Land Development Company to help the economy in diverse ways—the purchase and settlement of land, finding water, which in the case of Hulda required digging 150 meters into the earth, settling conflicts with Jewish laborers who refused to work for the low wages paid to the natives, the introduction of “mixed farming,” and attempting to meet the bitter hostility of the Arabs. As manager of the Zionist Action Committee he established his of-

fice in Jaffa, and between 1908 and 1916 spent over 1,000 days in travel, which was primitive, even as were the night-lodging accommodations. To advance his knowledge of Hebrew he obtained a Hebrew tutor—none other than the famous S. Y. Agnon, then known as C. Caczkas. Though he could never free himself from an accent, he learned to speak fluently.

The acquisition of land in Palestine is an exciting chapter in itself, with the famous Yehoshua Hankin as the hero. His task was "among the most difficult and the most important of all who worked in Palestine." And Ruppin miraculously always "found" the money to pay for that which Hankin had agreed to purchase.

On March 9, 1914, the author casually reports an important event. On that day he had bought a large piece of property on Mt. Scopus from an Englishman, "thus acquiring the first piece of ground for the Jewish University of Jerusalem." What foresight and what vision!

During World War I, with Palestine under Turkish rule, the Jews endured many trials and tribulations and Ruppin was among the many Yishuv notables who were expelled. He returned in 1920, after an absence of four years, when Herbert Samuel arrived as the British High Commissioner, to implement the Balfour Declaration which, of course, the Arabs resisted fiercely. Weizmann, who first appears in the entry of October 24, 1919, is referred to as the "supreme politician we needed at that moment," and great political skill was indeed imperative to frustrate British sabotage, not only of major undertakings, but even of "minor activity."

"Selected Diaries and Letters," the second part of the volume, is a mine of information on Jewish

life in Palestine from 1920–1942 in particular, and in the Diaspora in general. Little of importance to Jewry is overlooked, not excluding the Bolshevik revolution, the Stalin purge trials, Hitler's rise to power, and the fraudulent attempts to deal with Jewish refugees.

The most obstinate and persistent problem which appears again and again is that of Arab opposition. The natives begrudged the Jewish settlers "even the smallest amount of water taken from a common well." Though realizing, as far back as 1920, that "friendly arrangements" were important, Ruppin, nevertheless, confesses that he "does not see how such an arrangement is possible, or how it is to be achieved." The Arab response to all efforts at conciliation has always been riots, pogroms, attacks, boycotts and unspeakable hatred.

Herbert Samuel's attempt at large scale Arab appeasement, which failed disastrously, confirms the author's opinion. Verily, Samuel's arrival seems to have stimulated fresh and more violent outbreaks. On May 1, 1921, about 30 Jews were killed in Jaffa, including the gifted author, Joseph Brenner, who was murdered in his home. On May 5, Petah Tikvah was the scene of riots. Even Jerusalem was not spared outbreaks under the very eye of the not too friendly governor, Ronald Storrs. While Herbert Samuel's policy of leniency alienated the Yishuv, his prohibition of Jewish immigration and the shifting of hundreds of Jews to Cyprus made him appear a traitor to Jewish aspirations. Appeasement failed because, as Ruppin so clearly notes, the real centers of Arab politics were, even in 1920, in Baghdad, Cairo and Damascus, and not in Palestine.

Despite his pessimism, Ruppin was instrumental, along with Dr.

Judah Magnes, in organizing the Brith Shalom, in the hope of conciliating the Arabs, and persuading them to accept the Jewish presence in the land. Ruppin even headed the organization for a while, but since the Arabs were not interested in conciliation, the efforts failed.

The arrival of Sir John Chancellor on December 6, 1928, found the Yishuv infuriated. On Yom Kippur of that year, British police had attacked Jews at the Western Wall, and had forcibly removed a wooden partition which had been placed to separate the sexes. Riots, pogroms and massacres became frequent occurrences, with the worst one taking place in Hebron, where forty Yeshivah students were murdered in cold blood on Erev Tishah b'Av. But despite the riots, and despite the commissions which the British sent and which always ruled adversely to the interests of the Jews, Ruppin's faith in the permanence of the Yishuv remained firm.

Upon Hitler's rise to power in 1933, the author notes "the disappearance of Jewish Communists without trace." God alone knows how they were murdered, after helping the Nazis, at Stalin's behest, to destroy the Weimar Republic.

What looms on the Middle East horizon more than any other issue is that of the Arabs. And it is here where Ruppin, a founder and President of the Brith Shalom, offers expert advice, as valid today as when first enunciated.

After the riots of 1936, in which sixty Jews were killed in Jaffa alone, Ruppin sadly concludes that "we are living in a latent state of war with the Arabs, with the

loss of life inevitable" and that "a so-called understanding with the Arabs is impossible." Even the 10,000 British soldiers could not protect Jewish life and property, or, possibly, were not very anxious to do so.

In an address to the graduates of the Israel Defense Command and Staff School, delivered in 1967, and which appears at the end of the volume, Moshe Dayan pays a most unusual tribute to Arthur Ruppin. First, he hails him as one of the "thirty-six righteous upon whom the world is founded." He then proceeds to confirm his conviction that the Arabs simply do not want the Jews in Palestine under any condition. Political attitudes, Ruppin emphasized, are determined, not by reason, but by instinct. Dayan then reluctantly accepts Ruppin's melancholy conclusion "that a latent war is in progress which makes loss of life inevitable." Cairo wants, not peace, but the destruction of Israel. The Soviet presence has complicated the problem of peace even more, for the Soviet Union is, alas, better served by prolonging the strife than by stability. While the prospect of outright war is, at present, not acceptable to the Kremlin, a durable peace is even more objectionable.

This highly informative volume, which throws so much light on the growth and development of Jewish Palestine, is a testimonial to a courageous Jew who repudiated the Galut and who served his people and Erez Yisrael with the selflessness of a *zaddik*—a saint.

THEODORE N. LEWIS is rabbi of Progressive Shaari Zedek Synagogue, Brooklyn, N.Y.

On Wiesel

TO THE EDITOR OF JUDAISM:

As a translator of (some of) Wiesel's works . . . I . . . affirm that to . . . discuss a writer's "ear for tone" and ability or lack of it to sustain "voice" without reference to the original language in which the work is conceived and executed, is to bring to life all the remembered clichés about critics being writers *manqués*. To default Wiesel's tone and voice without reference to the French language in which he expresses the passion of his vision (the intensity of which even Garber condescendingly concedes) is as *huzpadic* as to fault in English translation Bialik's poetic gifts or Dostoevsky's dialogue skills. To be blunt, no translation does a writer full justice, and this is categoric.

Furthermore, critics of Wiesel's work in France . . . have praised him for his gifts of style and moral fervor; just last year the prestigious French Academy presented him with a citation for the "distinguished literary quality" of *Célébration hassidique* (the French original of *Souls on Fire*) . . .

If there are failures of tone and voice, I for one find them resident in Garber's critique rather than in the many-layered depths of Wiesel's work. The old adage is correct after all: critics may come and critics may go, but, lucky for the rest of us, the voices of serious writers go on being heard for all time.

LILY EDELMAN

Washington, D. C.

Professor Garber replies:

We touch at sacred cows only to be bitten by their keepers. My comments on Wiesel's handling of tone were limited to a few passing remarks. Since I was interested in pointing out Wiesel's concern with temporal and spiritual boundaries, which is one of the

most imaginative aspects of his work, I saw no need to give much space to a commonplace assertion which has often been made by readers of Wiesel, many of whom, like myself, can read him in both English and French. I shall stir that commonplace only enough to say that Wiesel's frequent bouts of mawkishness would probably be apparent in any developed language: I have my copy of *Le mendiant de Jérusalem* before me once again, and see no reason to change the statement or to expand it. It is true that the translation of *Beggar* does make him look particularly sentimental. But since the book is said to be "translated from the French by Lily Edelman and the author" we can assume that he approved of the English version, however it turned out. We shall rest content with her information that "no translation does a writer full justice, and this is categoric." As her letter demonstrates, Mrs. Edelman's memory for cliché is impressive.

FREDERICK GARBER

Binghamton, N. Y.

On Evaluating Rabbinic Judaism

TO THE EDITOR OF JUDAISM:

In Rabbi Rackman's review of Justice Haim Cohn's book (Summer 73) . . . he argues that any talk of Rabbinic "improvements" on harsh biblical legislation plays straight into the hands of Christian apologues, who have always claimed that "Jews made the improvements that they did because of the influence of the New Testament." "To make the law of Moses barbaric and the law of the Rabbis humane is to render a great service to Christianity and a great disservice to Jewish pride."

. . . It does *not*, in my view, follow that, if there have been Rabbinic attempts at "humanizing" biblical law, the inspiration of those attempts must have been emanating from Christian-

ity. On the contrary, it should not be too difficult to show that, in a number of instances . . . Christianity is actually harsher . . . than biblical teaching and its Rabbinic elaboration . . . But there is an even more important point at issue here. Are we to understand that . . . objective scholarship is to be ruled out *a priori*? . . .

Rabbi Rackman does bring to the fore a very important topic which should be on the agenda of modern Jewish scholarship: How *does* one evaluate the contributions of Rabbinic Judaism? (His) . . . statement that "the 'progressive doctors of law' were not rationalising their reforms by reference to verses in the Pentateuch, but were, in fact, goaded by those verses to do what they did," had . . . a familiar ring to it . . . I had read it all before—in the literature which marked the rise of the British Reform Movement in the last century! . . .

Perhaps . . . the whole endeavor of establishing criteria of "progress" is futile . . . It is wrong to insist that the later is invariably the better. But it is also wrong to claim that the earlier is invariably the unsurpassable.

JACOB J. PETUCHOWSKI
Cincinnati, Ohio

Rabbi Rackman *replies*:

I did not argue that early Christianity humanized any legal system. Indeed, I specifically stated that it did not even humanize Roman Law. Stoicism performed that task while the Church

was then concerned principally with legalizing its own status and protecting its right to take and hold property.

Second, I did not suggest that, in the interest of Jewish pride, Christianity should be denied any credit to which it is entitled. I simply bemoaned a fringe benefit that accrues to Christianity from Justice Cohn's approach when, in fact, it is not entitled to it.

Third, while I did not undertake to propose how one ought to evaluate Rabbinic Judaism, I certainly did not deny the Rabbis a very creative role in halakhic development . . . The early British Reformers may have felt that they could do a better job with Revelation than did the Rabbis. I am not so arrogant. I need the total heritage of the Written and the Oral Law—to which I am "wedded"—to feel fulfilled as a Jew. . . .

Recently, I published an essay on the many faces of Torah and brought down upon me the wrath of many in the Orthodox community. And now, just as Dr. Petuchowski tells me that I remind him of early British Reformers, my adversaries in my camp will tell me that I remind them of him! All I can hope for is that my continuing search for the "illumination of Torah" will also motivate others to search, without discarding either Revelation or Rabbinic Judaism, but cherishing and safeguarding both for such generations to come as will choose to continue the search.

EMANUEL RACKMAN
New York, N. Y.

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